

THE



DIAL

JUNE 1924

REMINISCENCES OF LEONID ANDREYEV

BY MAXIM GORKI

*Translated From the Russian by S. S. Koteliansky and
Katherine Mansfield*

IN the spring of 1898 I read in the Moscow Courier a story called Bergamot and Garaska, an Easter story of the usual type, written to appeal to the heart of the holiday reader. It reminded the world once again that man, at certain moments and in certain special circumstances, is still capable of generosity, and that occasionally enemies become friends, even if it doesn't last longer than a day.

Since Gogol's *The Overcoat*, Russian writers must have written hundreds or even thousands of such deliberately pathetic stories; they are, so to speak, the dandelions scattered among the superb flowers of genuine Russian literature, and are meant to brighten the beggarly life of the sick and rigid Russian soul.¹

But out of that story came the strong evidence of a talent which reminded me somewhat of Pomialovsky; also one glimpsed a roguish little smile on the author's face, a smile of mistrust of facts he chose to conceal; which little smile easily reconciled me to the inevitable, forced sentimentalism of Easter-tide and Christmas-season literature.

I wrote Andreyev a few lines about his story, and received an amusing answer; he wrote funny unusual phrases in a singular handwriting, with half-printed letters. I remember particularly one naïve and sceptical aphorism: "A well-fed man finds about

¹ Probably these are not the thoughts that came to me in those days, but no matter.

as much satisfaction in being generous as he does in drinking his after-dinner coffee."

So began my acquaintance with Leonid Nicolayevitch Andreyev. In the summer I read some more of his stories and sketches, written under the name of James Lynch, which pseudonym he used for journalistic work. I noticed how quickly and boldly the individual talent of the new writer was developing.

In the autumn, on my way to the Crimea, at the Kursk railway station in Moscow, someone introduced us to each other. Dressed in an oldish overcoat, with a shaggy sheepskin hat tilted to one side, he looked like a young actor in an Ukrainian theatrical company. His handsome face seemed to me not very mobile, but in the fixed glance of his dark eyes gleamed the smile which so pleasantly irradiated his stories and sketches. I don't remember his words, but they were unusual, and unusual also was the construction of his agitated speech. He spoke hurriedly, with a dullish, booming voice, with a little crisp cough, his words slightly choking him, while he waved his hands monotonously as though he were conducting an orchestra. He appeared to me a healthy, elfish, amusing man capable of supporting with a laugh the woes of this world. His excitement was pleasant.

"Let us be friends!" he said pressing my hand.

I too was joyfully excited.

In the winter, on my way from the Crimea to Nijni, I stopped in Moscow, and there our relations rapidly assumed the character of a close friendship.

Seeing how little in touch he was with reality, how little he cared about it, even, I was the more surprised by the power of his intuition, by the fertility of his imagination, by the grip of his fantasy. A single phrase, at times a single pointed word, was enough to start him off; and then, seizing the insignificant thing given him, he would instantly develop a scene, an anecdote, a character, or a story.

"Who is S?" he asked about a certain author fairly popular at that time.

"A tiger out of a furrier's shop."

He laughed, and lowering his voice as though communicating a secret, said hurriedly:

"You know, I must describe a man who has convinced himself that he is a hero, a tremendous destroyer of everything in the world, till he has become frightful even to himself—what! Everybody believes him; so well has he deceived himself. But away in his own corner, in real life, he is a mere miserable nonentity, afraid of his wife or even of his cat."

So, winding one word after another round the spindle of his flexible thought, he was always easily, gaily creating something unexpected and singular.

The palm of one of his hands had been pierced by a bullet, his fingers were crooked. I asked him how that happened.

"An *equivoque* of youthful romanticism," he replied. "You see, a man who has not attempted to kill himself doesn't amount to much."

Thereupon he sat down on the sofa beside me, and in superb fashion related how once, when a youth, he had thrown himself under a freight train, but fortunately had fallen alongside the rails, so that the train rushed over him and merely stunned him.

There was something vague, unreal in the story, but he embellished it with an astonishingly vivid description of the sensations of a man over whom hundreds of ton-loads are moving with an iron rumble. These sensations were familiar to me too: as a lad of about ten I used to lie down under a ballast train, competing in audacity with my playmates, one of whom, the pointsman's son, played the game with particular cool-headedness. It is an almost safe amusement, provided the furnace of the locomotive is raised high enough, and the train is moving uphill, not downhill, so that the brake-chains of the cars are tightly stretched, and can't hit you, or catch you and fling you on to the sleepers. For a few seconds you experience an eerie sensation, you try to press as flat and close to the ground as possible; and with the exertion of your whole will you fight against the passionate desire to stir, to raise your head. You feel that the stream of iron and timber, rushing over you, tears you off the ground and wants to drag you off somewhere; and the rumble and grinding of the iron resounds as it were in your bones. Then, when the train has passed, you still lie motionless for a minute or more, powerless to rise, seeming to swim along after the train; and it is as if your body stretched out endlessly, growing longer and longer, becoming light, and

melting into air, so that in another moment you will be flying above the earth. It is very pleasant to feel all this.

"What fascinated you in such an absurd game?" asked Andreyev.

I said that, perhaps, we were testing the power of our will, by opposing to the mechanical motion of huge masses, the conscious immobility of our puny little bodies.

"No," he replied, "that is too good; no child could think that."

Reminding him of how children love to "tread the cradle"—that is, to swing on the supple ice of a new-frozen pond or of a shallow river-bank—I said that boys generally liked dangerous games.

"No, it can't be that, altogether. Nearly all children are afraid of the dark. As the poet said:

"There is delight in battle,
And on the edge of a dark abyss,"

but that is merely 'fine words,' nothing more. I have a different idea, but I can't quite get at it."

And suddenly he started up, as though seared by an inner fire.

"I must write a story about a man who all his life long, suffering madly, sought the truth. And, behold, truth appeared to him, but he shut his eyes, stopped his ears, and said: 'I don't want thee, however fair thou mayst be; for my life, my torments have kindled in my soul a hatred of thee.' What do you think?"

I did not like the theme. He said, with a sigh:

"Yes, one must first decide where lies the truth—within man or outside him? According to you—it is within man?"

And he burst out into laughter:

"Then it is very bad, a very paltry affair."

There was scarcely a single fact, scarcely a single problem which Leonid Andreyev and I regarded in the same light; yet innumerable differences did not prevent us—for years—from feeling for one another an intense interest and a regard which is seldom felt even after a long-standing friendship. We were indefatigable in our discussions; I remember we once sat uninterruptedly for over twenty hours and drank several samovars of tea. Leonid swallowed an incredible quantity of tea.

He was a wonderfully interesting talker, inexhaustible and witty. Although his mind always manifested a stubborn tendency to peer into the darkest corners of the soul, nevertheless his thought was so alert, so capriciously individual, that it readily took grotesque and humorous forms. In conversation among friends he could use his sense of humour flexibly and beautifully; in his stories he unfortunately lost this capacity, which is so rare in a Russian.

But although he possessed a lively and sensitive imagination, he was lazy; he was much fonder of talking about literature than of creating it. The delight of martyr-like work, at night in stillness and solitude seated before a white, clean sheet of paper, was almost impossible to him, he valued but little the joy of covering that sheet with the pattern of words.

"I write with difficulty," he would confess. "The pens seem to me inconvenient, the process of writing, too slow and even degrading. My thoughts fly about like jackdaws in a fire; I soon tire of catching them and arranging them in proper order. Often this is what happens: I have written a word, and suddenly I am caught in a web; for no reason, I begin to think of geometry, algebra, and the teacher at my old school at Oriol, a very stupid man, indeed. He often quoted the words of some philosopher: 'True wisdom is calm.' But I know that the best men on earth suffer torments of agitation. Curse calm wisdom! But what is there instead of it? Beauty? *Vivat!* However, although I have not seen Venus in the original, she seems to me from her photographs a rather silly female. As a rule, pretty things are rather stupid. Take for instance, a peacock, a greyhound, a woman."

Indifferent to facts of actuality, sceptic in his attitude to the mind and will of man, it would seem that the idea of laying down the law, of playing the teacher, ought not to have attracted him. That is a *rôle* destined to a man who is familiar, much too familiar, with reality. But our very first conversation clearly indicated that, whilst possessing all the qualities of a superb artist, he wished to assume the pose of a thinker and of a philosopher as well. This seemed to me dangerous, almost hopeless, chiefly because his stock of knowledge was oddly poor. And one always felt as though he sensed the nearness of an invisible enemy, that he was arguing intensely with someone, and wanted to subdue him.

Leonid was not fond of reading; and though himself the maker of books, the creator of miracles, he looked upon old literature distrustfully and heedlessly.

"A book to you is like a fetish to a savage," he would say. "That is because you have not rubbed holes in your breeches on the benches of a public school, because you have not come into contact with university learning. But to me the *Iliad*, Poushkin, and all the rest are beslavered by teachers, are prostituted by hemorrhoidal officials. Sorrow Through Intelligence [a Russian play, by Griboyedov] is as boring to me as Knight and Hall's Arithmetic. I am as sick of The Captain's Daughter as I am of the little lady from the Tverskoy Boulevard."

I had too often heard these repeated sayings about the influence of the public school on a man's attitude to literature, and they had long since become unconvincing to me, for I felt in them the prejudice begotten by Russian laziness. Much more originally did L. Andreyev describe how the reviews and critical articles in the papers squeeze and maim books, treating them in the style of reports of street accidents.

"They are mills, they grind Shakespeare, the Bible, anything you like, into the dust of banality. I once read in a paper a critical article on Don Quixote, and I suddenly saw with horror that Don Quixote was an old man of my acquaintance, a director of the Court of Exchequer; he had a chronic cold in the nose and a mistress, a girl from a confectionery shop, whom he called by the grand name of Millie, but in actual life, on the boulevards, she was known as Sonka Bladder."

Yet although he held knowledge and books lightly, regarding them superficially, and at times with hostility, he was always keenly interested in what I was reading. On one occasion, seeing in my room at the Moscow Hotel Alexey Ostroumov's book on Sinesius, the Bishop of Ptolemais, he asked wonderingly:

"What do you want this for?"

I told him about the queer half-pagan Bishop, and read a few lines from his work, *In Praise of Baldness*. "What," asks Sinesius, "can be more divine, yet what is balder, than the sphere?"

This pathetic exclamation of the descendant of Hercules sent Leonid into a fit of laughter; but immediately, wiping the tears from his eyes and still laughing, he said:

"You know, it is a superb subject for a story about an unbeliever who, wishing to test the stupidity of believers, assumes a mask of saintliness, lives the life of a martyr, preaches a new doctrine of God—a very stupid doctrine—and so attains the love and admiration of thousands. Then he says to his disciples and followers: 'All this is rubbish.' But they need a faith, and so they kill him."

I was struck by his words. The point was that Sinesius had expressed the same idea:

"If I were told that a Bishop must share the opinions of the people, I would reveal to all who I am. For what can there be in common between the rabble and philosophy? Divine truth must be hidden; the people need something quite different."

But I had not told Andreyev of that idea, nor had I had an opportunity of telling him about the unusual position of the unbaptized pagan-philosopher who found himself playing the rôle of Bishop in the Christian Church. When eventually I did so, he exclaimed triumphantly and laughing:

"There you see—one does not need to be always reading in order to know and to understand."

Leonid was talented by nature, organically talented; his intuition was astonishingly keen. In all that touched on the dark side of life, the contradictions in the human soul, the rumblings in the domain of the instincts, he had eerie powers of divination. The instance of Bishop Sinesius is not the only one; I could quote a score of such cases.

Thus, talking with him about various seekers after an unshakable belief, I related to him the contents of the MS. Confession, by the priest Apollonov—a work by one of the unknown martyrs of thought which had called forth Leo Tolstoy's Confession. I told him what I had observed personally of men of dogmatic beliefs: they often appear voluntary prisoners of a blind, unyielding faith, and the more they actively defend its validity the more despairingly they doubt it.

Andreyev mused for a while, slowly stirring his glass of tea; then he said, smiling:

"It is strange to me that you understand this; you speak like an atheist, but you think as a believer. If you die before me I

will inscribe on your gravestone: 'Crying to others to worship reason, he himself secretly mocked at its impotence.' "

And in a couple of minutes, leaning on my shoulder, glancing into my eyes with the dilated pupils of his dark eyes, he said in an undertone:

"I shall write about a parson, you will see! This, my dear fellow, I shall do well!"

And threatening someone with his finger, vigorously rubbing his temples, he smiled:

"To-morrow I am going home and shall begin it! I have even got the opening sentence: 'Among people he was lonely, for he had a glimpse of a great mystery.' "

Next day he went away to Moscow, and in a week's time—not more—he wrote to me that he was working on the parson, and that his work was going smoothly "as on snow-shoes." Thus he always caught on the wing anything that answered the needs of his spirit, that was in labour with the most acute and tormenting mysteries of life.

The noisy success of his first book filled him to overflowing with youthful joy. He came to me at Nijni—happy, in a brand new suit of tobacco colour; the front of his stiffly starched shirt was adorned with a rakishly bright tie, and on his feet he had yellow boots.

"I tried to find straw-coloured gloves, but a lady in the shop at Kuznetsky warned me that straw-colour was no longer the fashion. I suspect that she told a fib. The truth was she valued the freedom of her heart too much to risk becoming convinced of my irresistible attractiveness in straw-coloured gloves. But, between ourselves, I can tell you that all this magnificence is uncomfortable; a blouse is much better."

And suddenly, hugging my shoulders, he said:

"I want to write a hymn, you know. I don't yet see, to whom or to what; but a hymn it must be! Something Schillerian, eh? Something grand, sonorous—boom-m!"

I chaffed him about it.

"Well!" he exclaimed merrily. "Is not Ecclesiastes right when he says: 'Even a rotten life is better than a good death'? Although he puts it rather differently, something about a lion and a dog: 'For domestic purposes a bad dog is more useful than a

nice lion.' Well, what do you think: could Job have read the book of Ecclesiastes?"

Intoxicated with the wine of joy, he dreamt of a journey on the Volga in a good boat, of walking to the Crimea.

"I'll drag you off too. Otherwise you will build yourself in among these old bricks," he said, pointing to the books.

His happiness resembled the lively and comfortable state of a baby which has been hungry too long and now thinks it has eaten enough to last for ever.

We sat on a wide divan, in a little room, and drank red wine; Andreyev took down from the shelf a note-book of poems.

"May I?" he asked, and began reading aloud:

'Columns of coppery firs,
The monotonous sound of the sea.'

"It is the Crimea? Now I can't write poems, and I have no desire to. I like ballads best. As a rule:

'I love all that is new,
Romantic, nonsensical,
Like the poet
Of olden times.'

"I believe that is a song in the musical comedy, *The Green Island*:

'And the trees are moaning
Like verses unrhymed.'

"That I like. But—tell me—why do you write poems? It does not suit you at all. After all, whatever you may think, verse is an artificial business."

Then we composed parodies of Skitalezh:

"I'll grasp a huge log
In my mighty hand,
And all of you—unto the seventh generation—
I will knock down flat!

Moreover I will stupefy you—
Hurrah! Tr-r-remble! I am glad—
I'll dash Kasbeck on your heads,
I'll bring down Ararat upon you!"

He laughed as he went on composing verse after verse of delightful, amusing parodies. But suddenly bending towards me, with a glass of wine in his hand, he began in a low voice and gravely:

"I read recently an amusing anecdote. In a certain English town there stands a memorial to Robert Burns, the poet. But there is no inscription on the memorial to inform you to whom it is erected. At the foot of it a boy was selling newspapers. A certain author came up to him and said: 'I'll buy a paper from you if you'll tell me whose statue this is.'—'Robert Burns's,' the boy replied. 'Splendid!' said the author. 'Now I'll buy all your papers if you'll tell me why this memorial was erected to Robert Burns.' The boy replied: 'Because he is dead.' How do you like it?"

I did not much like it; I was always seriously perturbed by Leonid's sharp and sudden fluctuations of mood.

Fame to him was not merely "a bright patch on the bard's old rags"—he wanted a great deal of it, he wanted it greedily, and he made no secret of his desires. He said:

"When I was only fourteen I said to myself: I shall be famous or life won't be worth living. I am not afraid of telling you that all that has been done before my time seems to me no better than what I myself can do. If you take that for conceit, you are wrong. Yes! Don't you see that this must be the basic conviction of any one who does not want to place himself in the impersonal ranks of the millions of others? Indeed, the conviction of one's uniqueness must—and can—serve as the source of creative power. First let us say to ourselves: We are not like all the others; and already we are on the way to prove this to all the rest as well."

"In a word you are a baby which does not want to feed at its nurse's breast."

"Just so! I want the milk of my soul only. Man needs love and attention, or that people should fear him. This even peasants

realize, when they put on the mask of a sorcerer. Happiest of all are those who are loved with fear, as Napoleon was."

"Have you read his *Memoirs*?"

"No. I don't need to."

He winked at me, smiling:

"I too keep a diary and I know how it is done. *Memoirs*, confessions, and such-like are the excrements of the soul that is poisoned by bad food."

He loved such sayings, and when they were successful he was sincerely delighted. Despite his gravitation towards pessimism there was in him something ineradicably childish; for instance his childishly naïve boasting about his verbal agility, of which he made much better use in conversation than on paper.

Once I told him about a woman who prided herself to such a degree on her "honest" life, and took so much trouble to convince all and sundry of her inaccessibility, that those who surrounded her gasped from weariness, and either rushed headlong away from this model of virtue, or hated her to a pitch of frenzy.

Andreyev listened, smiled, and suddenly said:

"I am an honest woman, I am. I have no need to clean my nails, eh?"

In these words with almost perfect exactness he defined the character and even the habits of the creature of whom I was speaking—the woman was careless in her person. I told him this. He was delighted, and with childish sincerity began to boast:

"My dear fellow, I am myself surprised at times to find how cleverly and pointedly I can in two or three words seize the very essence of a fact or of a character."

And he delivered a long speech in praise of himself; but—sensible man that he was—he realized that this was a trifle ridiculous, and he ended his tirade with a touch of buffoonery.

"In time I shall develop my capacity as a genius to such an extent that I shall be able to define in a single word the meaning of the whole life of a man, of a nation, of an epoch."

Yet the critical attitude towards himself was not particularly strongly developed in him; and this at times greatly spoiled his work and his life.

In every one of us, to my thinking, live and struggle embryos of several personalities. These strive among themselves, until in

the struggle there is developed the embryo which is the strongest and most capable of adapting itself to the various impressional reactions which form the final spiritual character of a man, and thus is established a more or less complete psychical individuality.

Strangely and to his own torment Leonid split into two: in one and the same week he could sing Hosannah to the world, and pronounce Anathema against it.

This was not an external contradiction between the bases of his character and the habits or demands of his profession; no, in both cases he felt equally sincerely. And, the more loudly he proclaimed Hosannah, the more powerfully resounded the echo: Anathema!

He said:

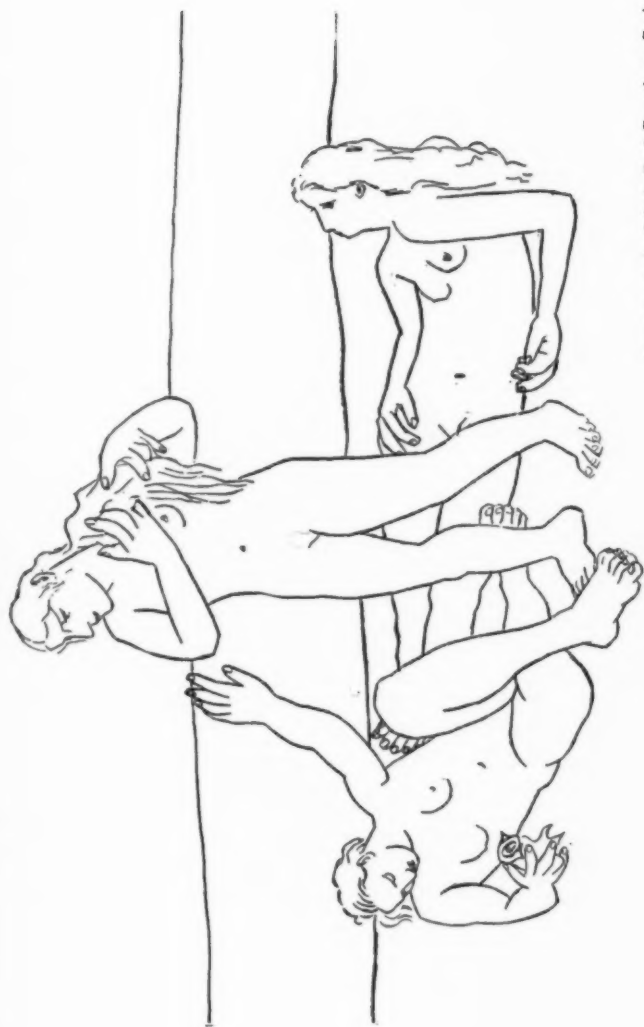
"I hate individuals who refuse to walk on the sunny side of the street for fear that their faces may be burnt or their jackets faded; I hate all those who for dogmatic motives hamper the free, capricious play of their inner ego."

Once he wrote a rather caustic article on the people of the shady side, and immediately after this—on the occasion of Emile Zola's death from gas fumes—engaged in a vigorous attack on the barbarous asceticism, at that time fairly popular, of the intelligentsia. But talking to me about that attack, he declared suddenly:

"And yet, you know, my opponent is more consistent than I am: a writer ought to live like a homeless tramp. Maupassant's yacht is an absurdity!"

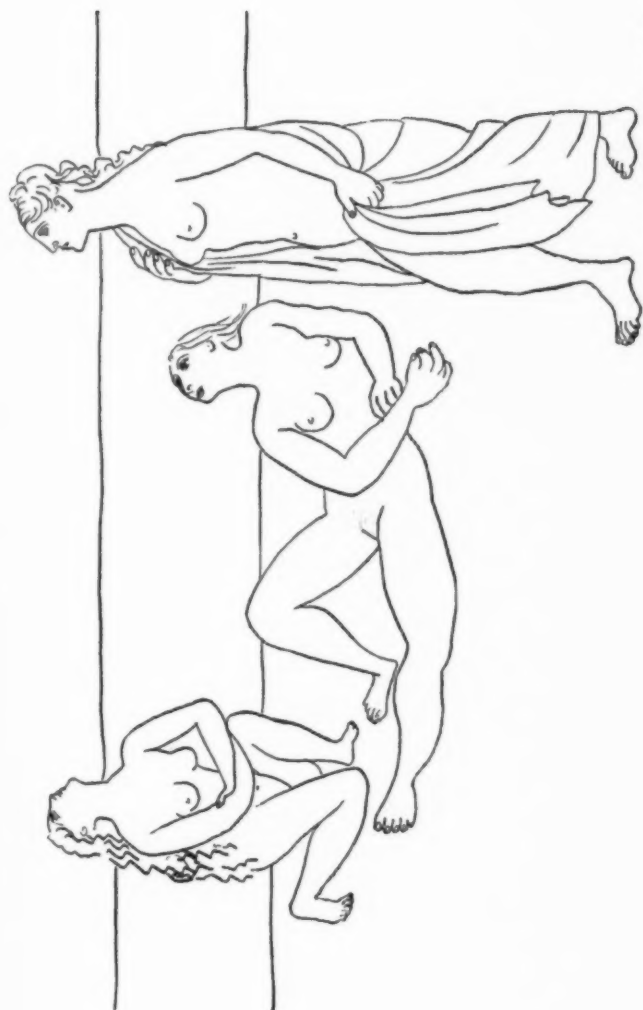
He was not joking. We had an argument. I maintained that the more varied the needs of man, and the more eager he is for the joys of life, however paltry, the quicker develops the culture of the body and of the spirit. He retorted: "No, Tolstoy is right, culture is rubbish, it only maims the free growth of the soul."

To be continued



Courtesy of the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris

PENCIL DRAWING. BY PABLO PICASSO



Courtesy of the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris

PENCIL DRAWING. BY PABLO PICASSO



Courtesy of the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris
PENCIL DRAWING. BY PABLO PICASSO

[Au
of a
indi
lariz
a so
cent
mov
My
and
posse
frien
stan

T
follo
ing

"
fami
grea
men
remo
fer a
Kust
to th
phile
passi
cian,
in a
deep
only
warn
wife

FOUR POEMS

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: I wrote *Leda* and the *Swan* because the editor of a political review asked me for a poem. I thought, "After the individualist, demagogic movement, founded by Hobbes and popularized by the Encyclopaedists and the French Revolution, we have a soil so exhausted that it cannot grow that crop again for centuries." Then I thought, "Nothing is now possible but some movement from above preceded by some violent annunciation." My fancy began to play with *Leda* and the *Swan* for metaphor, and I began this poem; but as I wrote, bird and lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it, and my friend tells me that his "conservative readers would misunderstand the poem."

The poem, *The Gift of Harun-al-Rashid*, is founded on the following passage in a letter of Owen Aherne's, which I am publishing in *A Vision*:

"After the murder for an unknown reason of Jaffer, head of the family of the Barmecides, Harun-al-Rashid seemed as though a great weight had fallen from him, and in the rejoicing of the moment, a rejoicing that seemed to Jaffer's friends a disguise for his remorse, he brought a new bride into the house. Wishing to confer an equal happiness upon his friend, he chose a young bride for Kusta-ben-Luka. According to one tradition of the desert, she had, to the great surprise of her friends, fallen in love with the elderly philosopher, but according to another, Harun bought her from a passing merchant. Kusta, a Christian like the Caliph's own physician, had planned, one version of the story says, to end his days in a monastery at Nisibis, while another story has it that he was deep in a violent love-affair that he had arranged for himself. The only thing upon which there is general agreement is that he was warned by a dream to accept the gift of the Caliph, and that his wife, a few days after the marriage, began to talk in her sleep, and

that she told him all those things which he had searched for vainly all his life in the great library of the Caliph, and in the conversation of wise men. One curious detail has come down to us in Bedouin tradition. When awake she was a merry girl with no more interest in matters of the kind than other girls of her age, and Kusta, the apple of whose eye she had become, fearing that it would make her think his love but self-interest, never told her that she talked to him in her sleep. Michael Robartes frequently heard Bedouins quoting this as proof of Kusta-ben-Luka's extraordinary wisdom. . . . Even in the other world Kusta's bride is supposed to remain in ignorance of her share in founding the religion of the Judwalis, and for this reason young girls who think themselves wise are ordered by their fathers and mothers to wear little amulets on which her name has been written. All these contradictory stories seem to be a confused recollection of the contents of a little old book, lost many years ago with Kusta-ben-Luka's larger book in the desert battle which I have already described. This little book was discovered, according to tradition, by some Judwali scholar or saint between the pages of a Greek book which had once been in the Caliph's library. The story of the discovery may however be the invention of a much later age, to justify some doctrine or development of old doctrines that it may have contained."

In my poem I have greatly elaborated this bare narrative, but I do not think it too great a poetical licence to describe Kusta as hesitating between the Poems of Sappho and the Treatise of Parmenides as hiding places. Gibbon says the poems of Sappho were extant in the twelfth century, and it does not seem impossible that a great philosophical work, of which we possess only fragments, may have found its way into an Arab library of the eighth century. Certainly there are passages of Parmenides, that for instance numbered 130 by Burkitt, and still more in his immediate predecessors, which Kusta would have recognized as his own thought. This from Heraclitus for instance: "Mortals are Immortals and Immortals are Mortals, the one living the others' death and dying the others' life."]

LEDA AND THE SWAN

A rush, a sudden wheel, and hovering still
The bird descends, and her frail thighs are pressed
By the webbed toes, and that all-powerful bill
Has laid her helpless face upon his breast.
How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs!
All the stretched body's laid on the white rush
And feels the strange heart beating where it lies;
A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

THE GIFT OF HARUN-AL-RASHID

Kusta-ben-Luka is my name, I write
To Abd-al-Rabban; fellow roisterer once,
Now the good Caliph's learned Treasurer,
And for no ear but his.

Carry this letter

Through the great gallery of the Treasure House
Where banners of the Caliphs¹ hang, night-coloured
But brilliant as the night's embroidery,
And wait war's music; pass the little gallery;
Pass books of learning from Byzantium
Written in gold upon a purple stain,
And pause at last, I was about to say,
At the great book of Sappho's song; but no
For should you leave my letter there, a boy's
Love-lorn, indifferent hands might come upon it
And let it fall unnoticed to the floor.

¹ The banners of the Abbasid Caliphs were black as an act of mourning for those who had fallen in battle at the establishment of the dynasty.

Pause at the Treatise of Parmenides
And hide it there, for Caliphs to world's end
Must keep that perfect, as they keep her song
So great its fame.

When fitting time has passed
The parchment will disclose to some learned man
A mystery that else had found no chronicler
But the wild Bedouin. Though I approve
Those wanderers that welcomed in their tents
What great Harun-al-Rashid, occupied
With Persian wars or Greek ambassadors
Or those who need his bounty or his law,
Must needs neglect; I cannot hide the truth
That wandering in a desert, featureless
As air under a wing, can give bird's wit.
In after time they will speak much of me
And speak but fantasy. Recall the year
When our beloved Caliph put to death
His Vizier Jaffer for an unknown reason;
"If but the shirt upon my body knew it
I'd tear it off and throw it in the fire."
That speech was all that the town knew, but he
Seemed for a while to have grown young again;
Seemed so on purpose, muttered Jaffer's friends,
That none might know that he was conscience-struck—
But that's a traitor's thought. Enough for me
That in the early summer of the year
The mightiest of the princes of the world
Came to the least considered of his courtiers;
Sat down upon the fountain's marble edge
One hand amid the goldfish in the pool;
And thereupon a colloquy took place
That I commend to all the chroniclers
To show how violent great hearts can lose
Their bitterness and find the honeycomb.
"I have brought a slender bride into the house;
You know the saying 'change the bride with Spring,'
And she and I, being sunk in happiness,
Cannot endure to think you tread these paths,

When evening stirs the jasmine, and yet
Are brideless."

"I am falling into years."

"But such as you and I do not seem old
Like men who live by habit. Every day
I ride with falcon to the river's edge
Or carry the ringed mail upon my back,
Or court a woman; neither enemy,
Game-bird, nor woman does the same thing twice;
And so a hunter carries in the eye
A mimicry of youth. Can poet's thought
That springs from body and in body falls
Like this pure jet now lost amid blue sky
Now bathing lily leaf and fishes' scale
Be mimicry?"

"What matter if our souls
Are nearer to the surface of the body
Than souls that start no game and turn no rhyme!
The soul's own youth and not the body's youth
Shows through our lineaments. My candle's bright,
My lantern is too loyal not to show
That it was made in your great father's reign.
And yet the jasmine season warms our blood."

"Great prince, forgive the freedom of my speech;
You think that love has seasons, and you think
That if the spring bear off what the spring gave
The heart need suffer no defeat; but I
Who have accepted the Byzantine faith,
That seems unnatural to Arabian minds,
Think when I choose a bride I choose for ever;
And if her eye should not grow bright for mine
Or brighten only for some younger eye,
My heart could never turn from daily ruin,
Nor find a remedy."

"But what if I

Have lit upon a woman, who so shares
Your thirst for those old crabbed mysteries
So strains to look beyond our life, an eye
That never knew that strain would scarce seem bright,
And yet herself can seem youth's very fountain,
Being all brimmed with life."

"Were it but true
I would have found the best that life can give,
Companionship in those mysterious things
That make a man's soul or a woman's soul
Itself and not some other soul."

"That love
Must needs be in this life and in what follows
Unchanging and at peace, and it is right
Every philosopher should praise that love.
But I being none can praise its opposite.
It makes my passion stronger but to think
Like passion stirs the peacock and his mate
The wild stag and the doe; that mouth to mouth
Is a man's mockery of the changeless soul."

And thereupon his bounty gave what now
Can shake more blossom from autumnal chill
Than all my bursting springtime knew. A girl
Perched in some window of her mother's house
Had watched my daily passage to and fro;
Had heard impossible history of my past;
Imagined some impossible history
Lived at my side; thought Time's disfiguring touch
Gave but more reason for a woman's care.
Yet was it love of me, or was it love
Of the stark mystery that has dazed my sight
Perplexed her fantasy and planned her care?
Or did the torch-light of that mystery
Pick out my features in such light and shade
Two contemplating passions chose one theme
Through sheer bewilderment? She had not paced
The garden paths, nor counted up the rooms,

Before she had spread a book upon her knees
And asked about the pictures or the text;
And often those first days I saw her stare
On old dry writing in a learned tongue,
On old dry faggots that could never please
The extravagance of spring; or move a hand
As if that writing or the figured page
Were some dear cheek.

Upon a moonless night
I sat where I could watch her sleeping form,
And wrote by candle-light; but her form moved,
And fearing that my light disturbed her sleep
I rose that I might screen it with a cloth.
I heard her voice. "Turn that I may expound
What's bowed your shoulder and made pale your cheek";
And saw her sitting upright on the bed;
Or was it she that spoke or some great Jinn?
I say that a Jinn spoke. A live-long hour
She seemed the learned man and I the child;
Truths without father came, truths that no book
Of all the uncounted books that I have read,
Nor thought out of her mind or mine begot,
Self-born, high-born, and solitary truths,
Those terrible implacable straight lines
Drawn through the wandering vegetative dream,
Even those truths that when my bones are dust
Must drive the Arabian host.

The voice grew still,
And she lay down upon her bed and slept,
But woke at the first gleam of day, rose up
And swept the house and sang about her work
In childish ignorance of all that passed.

A dozen nights of natural sleep, and then
When the full moon swam to its greatest height
She rose, and with her eyes shut fast in sleep
Walked through the house. Unnoticed and unfelt
I wrapped her in a heavy hooded cloak, and she,

Half running, dropped at the first ridge of the desert
 And there marked out those emblems on the sand
 That day by day I study and marvel at,
 With her white finger. I led her home asleep
 And once again she rose and swept the house
 In childish ignorance of all that passed.
 Even to-day, after some seven years,
 When maybe thrice in every moon her mouth
 Murmured the wisdom of the desert Jinns,
 She keeps that ignorance, nor has she now
 That first unnatural interest in my books.
 It seems enough that I am there; and yet
 Old fellow-student, whose most patient ear
 Heard all the anxiety of my passionate youth,
 It seems I must buy knowledge with my peace.
 What if she lose her ignorance, and so
 Dream that I love her only for the voice,
 That every gift and every word of praise
 Is but a payment for that midnight voice
 That is to age what milk is to a child!
 Were she to lose her love, because she had lost
 Her confidence in mine, or even lose
 Its first simplicity, love, voice, and all,
 All my fine feathers would be plucked away
 And I left shivering. The voice has drawn
 A quality of wisdom from her love's
 Particular quality. The signs and shapes;
 All those abstractions that you fancied were
 From the great Treatise of Parmenides;
 All, all those gyres and cubes and midnight things¹
 Are but a new expression of her body
 Drunk with the bitter sweetness of her youth.
 And now my utmost mystery is out.
 A woman's beauty is a storm-tossed banner;
 Under it wisdom stands, and I alone—
 Out of ten thousand winters, I alone—
 Nor dazzled by the embroidery, nor lost

¹ This refers to the geometrical forms which Robartes describes the Judwali Arabs as making upon the sand for the instruction of their young people, and which, according to tradition, were drawn as described in sleep by the wife of Kusta-ben-Luka.

In the confusion of its night-dark folds
Can hear the armed man speak.

THE LOVER SPEAKS

A strange thing surely that my heart when love had come unsought
Upon the northern upland or in that poplar shade,
Should find no burden but itself and yet should be worn out.
It could not bear that burden and therefore it went mad.

The south wind brought it longing, and the east brought in despair,
The west wind made it pitiful and the north wind afraid;
It feared to give its love a hurt with all the tempest there;
It feared the hurt that she could give and therefore it went mad.

I can exchange opinion with any neighbouring mind,
I have as healthy flesh and blood as any rhymers had,
But oh my heart could bear no more when the upland caught the
wind;
I ran, I ran from my love's side because my heart went mad.

THE HEART REPLIES

The Heart behind its rib laughed out, "You have called me mad,"
it said,
"Because I made you turn away and run from that young child;
How could she mate with fifty years that was so wildly bred?
Let the cage bird and the cage bird mate and the wild bird mate
in the wild."

"You but imagine lies all day, O murderer," I replied,
"And all those lies have but one end poor wretches to betray;
I did not find in any cage the woman at my side.
O but her heart would break to learn my thoughts are far away."

"Speak all your mind," my heart sang out; "speak all your mind,
who cares
Now that your tongue cannot persuade the child till she mistake
Her childish gratitude for love and match your fifty years,
O let her choose a young man now and all for his wild sake."

MR EPSTEIN'S SCULPTURE

BY ROGER FRY

OF all the forms of boredom which afflict civilized man, there are probably few more acute or more unvarying than that which results from having, on occasions, to contemplate ordinary works of sculpture. Indeed, so evident is this that it would doubtless be universally recognized, and the habit of erecting sculptures would cease altogether were it not that the bulk, durability, and expense of sculptured stone and cast bronze make them peculiarly suitable for memorials and monuments. But fortunately these objects perform their function without troubling us much—except just the moment after the Royal person has unveiled the object, we are not called upon to give it much attention. It is safe upon its pedestal for the rest of time, and can only exhale a faint exhortation to conventional public spirit which flatters the good citizen and only slightly irritates the bad, who looks upon the work as a symbol which he and his fellow revolutionists may look forward to the fun of destroying at some future date.

Such then being the main uses of sculpture, most of us naturally look upon it as entirely remote from any personal emotion or interest other than that general all-pervading feeling of boredom with which it is so thoroughly imbued. We are brought up to a pious belief that sculpture is an altogether noble and reputable affair. We know the names of the great sculptors of all ages, and yet sculpture has always bored us—till now. And now comes Mr Epstein, and as we passed round the Leicester Gallery where his work has been on exhibition, each bronze head gave us a new and distinct sensation, a thrill of wonder, surprise, recognition, and, as a result of so pleasant a shock, admiration and gratitude. What miraculous gift was this which could make bronze reveal to us definite, singular, vivid human beings—human beings more definite, more emphatically personal, more incisive in the accent of their individuality, more invasive, at a first glance, of our own consciousness than the individuals of actual life?

Mr Epstein started from the first with remarkable gifts, but in

his early work he was an experimentalist in styles. He ingeniously constructed a kind of archaistic decorative simplification with rude accents suggestive of actuality. Then at one moment with his insatiable technical acquisitiveness he learned to treat each sitter according to what he felt to be a style corresponding to his or her character—we had the strangest mixture, a single series of busts, of Chinese bronzes, early Greek marbles, Aztec, and Rodin. Now at last he has found himself; he has developed a method and a manner of seeing which look as though they were definitive. One imagines that he can go on indefinitely along these lines, increasing the intimacy of his reading of character, the psychological intensity of the mood, the incisiveness and *brio* of the execution. He is surely to be congratulated on having found his own indisputably original and unique artistic personality. There is no doubt about it; it sticks out authentically from all the works, however varied the subjects may be. However completely he seems to abandon himself to the personality he is interpreting, it is Epstein's personality that really startles, interests, and intrigues us. That is the way of the great masters, or at least of most of them; and indeed, when we realize the astonishing assurance, the indisputable completeness and efficacy of these works, the brilliant resourcefulness and certainty of the technique, we must call Epstein a master.

His technical resourcefulness is extraordinary. By frankly accepting the nature of clay modelling, he gets a strangely vivid and exhilarating surface quality. That is to say, he accepts the fact that the head is built up by adding small pellets of clay one after another. He never tries to cover up his traces: one sees how the head has grown centrifugally, how the prominences have gradually pushed outwards to receive the light. Whether we realize this growth from within or not, we feel that the way these pleasingly broken surfaces take the light when once the clay has been translated into bronze is eminently evocative and allows of the utmost accent with the greatest breadth. Were the surfaces which take the light smoothed down, they would lack the glittering variety of light and shade and the sense of mass and resistance that go with that. Now that he has found his style, we can recognize certain definite mannerisms. It would be easy to parody an Epstein. But the mannerisms are not idle or irrelevant affections; they are inevitable steps toward the end he pursues. Since it is the per-

sonality presented as drama that he envisages, he seizes on those aspects of the head which reveal it most sharply. Generally the head is tilted back so that the chin protrudes and the planes of the forehead, eyelids, nose, and upper lip are turned to receive the fullest light. All these planes are enlarged, and their lower limits either deeply undercut or at least marked by a sharp edge. In general the features are amplified so as to occupy the whole of the mask, and the mask in turn is pulled out, as it were, at the edges, receding frequently to an anatomically impossible hollow above the ears so as to give all possible expression to the receding ridge of the cheek bone.

In general Mr Epstein follows the tradition of dramatic sculpture by working with ridges and bosses rather than by the architecture of planes. For this dramatic sculpture is no new thing, though it has boasted few great masters. Where Mr Epstein is perhaps peculiar is in the vehement notation of actuality in the individual head, but even here those who knew Guido Mazzoni's *Pietà* at Modena will recognize that at least one artist of the Renaissance had anticipated a result which seems surprising when we thus meet it afresh and with all the marks of modernity. Indeed, Mr Epstein's *Weeping Woman* is singularly like one of the mourners in that group who kneels with hands clasped and mouth awry. Mr Epstein's distortions then are not caprices; they are not made to show how modern he is; they come inevitably out of his aim; they are necessary to his full expression. Decidedly Mr Epstein is a master.

But a master of what? murmurs a still small voice within me which all the turbulence and impressiveness of these works does not entirely silence. A master of what? Of the craft of sculpture, undoubtedly; of vigorous characterization, certainly after a fashion, but even here I should have to make reservations. Even if we are to regard sculpture as a peculiarly effective form of representation—more than making up for the lack of colour by the palpability of its form—even so, one can imagine a finer, more penetrating, less clamant kind of interpretation of character. One might tire, perhaps, of the element not only of caricature—since all interpretation of character partakes of the nature of caricature—but of its direction. One might soon long for something which, even at the cost of being less immediately impressive, wooed one to a gentler,

more intimate contemplation—something in which the finer shades were not so immediately blotted out by the big sweep of the most striking, first-seen peculiarities. One would prefer to live with something less vehement in its attack, rather more persuasive.

But this is a question of taste and perhaps of individual temperament, and there can be no doubt that if we are to regard sculpture in this light it is better to have such strong, broad, racy, even brutal characterization than the merely toned-down, the insipid, the genteel of fashionable portraiture. This at least is alive; it stirs and moves some corresponding fibres in our nature. This has at least a genuine dramatic appeal, even though, like some greatly admired actors, it seems a little too much preoccupied with getting its effects over the footlights and right to the back of the pit.

But this digression has not stopped the inner voice. It persists: Is he a master of sculpture? And, alas! I am bound to say to the best of my belief, No. If I examine my own sensations and emotions, I am bound to confess that they seem to be of quite a different nature when I look at good sculpture from what I feel in front of Mr Epstein's bronzes. There is an undoubted pleasure in seeing any work accomplished with such confidence and assurance, such certainty and precision of touch; there is a powerful stimulus in the presence of such vividly dramatized personalities, but the peculiar emotions which great sculpture gives seem to me quite different. They come from the recognition of inevitable harmonic sequences of planes of a complete equilibrium established through the interplay of diverse movements and a perfect subordination of surface and handling to the full apprehension of these and similar qualities. It may be, of course, that I am so carried away, so disturbed if you like, by all those other qualities of drama and actuality which Mr Epstein's work displays that I cannot feel this purely formal stimulus to the imagination which is what I seek for in sculpture. But there is the fact as I see it. These busts are for me brilliant but rather crude representations in the round. If these are sculpture, then I want another word for what M Maillol and Mr Dobson practise, let alone Luca della Robbia and the Sumerians.

Fortunately for Mr Epstein, there are a great many people whose imaginations are excited by really capable dramatic representation, and there are very few people who happen to like sculpture in my

sense. The majority are quite right to acclaim him as a master, since the gift necessary for such work is a very rare one and he has used it and developed it pertinaciously, and since it does give genuine pleasure. Such work as this is infinitely better than the stylistic, decorative arrangements with which Mr Epstein started, and in which some of his most celebrated foreign rivals still persist. It is a triumphant expression of genuine feelings about people's character as expressed in their features, and if it does not evince any peculiar and exhilarating sense of formal harmony, so much the worse for the few people who happen to have a passion of such an odd kind.

er,
nas
ive
the
ed,
ist.
le's
nce
uch
uch



DOLORS. BY JACOB EPSTEIN



MIRIAM. BY JACOB EPSTEIN



KATHLEEN. BY JACOB EPSTEIN

I
gro
sur
ass
this
for
ac
this
pre
did
out
to
any
lea
?
It i
lov
it i
lig
art
cre
is t
cre
Th
of
cal
fro
the
for
tiv

THE GODS

BY ELIE FAURE

Translated From the French by Walter Pach

I HAVE said enough to show that I do not absolutely accept the saying of Nietzsche: "Art raises its head when religion loses ground," unless he meant that art often exists before religion and survives it and replaces it when it deserts the hearts of men, and assumes the rôle of a religion in certain cases, often magnifying this rôle when the heart beats in the breast of a hero. Idolatry, fortunately, survives the idol, because it leads mind to mind across appearances, and because it is the only thing that leads in this way. Outside of idolatry—and science is at present the predominant form of idolatry, the most unanimously and candidly accepted, the most cherished, and therefore the cruellest—outside the matter of the world which men interrogate in order to discover what gives it form and movement, there is no longer anything but arid abstraction, the play of the unstable, a circle leading to death.

The idol as a fetish everywhere precedes ritualized religion. It is everywhere reborn, when religion declines. It is everywhere loved and studied, even outside the religion. It is not true that it is born by grace of the religion alone and as a matter of religion. Totemism is not the origin, but one of the origins, of art. There is also—and doubtless it comes first—utility, which creates ceramics, the weapon, the garment, and the tool. There is the obscure sense of rhythm and the need to express it, which create music and the dance—one sees this clearly with the child. There is love, which creates tattooing, adornment, the dressing of the hair, and the jewel. There are hunting and fishing, which call forth recital and description, recital and description which gain from being illustrated. There is the need for shelter, from which there came forth architecture. The immense solicitation of forms, colours, and movements awakens anxious curiosity in primitive man, and he cannot deliver himself of it save by imagining an

approximate equivalent which shall prove to him his power of re-creating, for his joy and also in his interest, a universe endowed with forms, colours, and movements.

Neither the pure cult of the spirit nor objective knowledge destroys idolatry. They change its place or renew it, and that is all. We saw this clearly in the case of the iconoclastic Jewish idea, which reached the heart of the Occident only by means of the cathedral with its wealth of form. We saw it in the case of Eastern Christianity when it decorated the Panathenaic processions with new names, and when it called Orpheus David in order to maintain the lyre among us. We see it in the bosom of Islam itself which cannot prevent the Persian illuminator from replacing the religious idols with the most charming painting of the city and of the world that exists. We saw it in the Italian Renaissance laying its nude Venus in the bed that is still warm from the presence of Mary when she gave birth to the god. We saw it in the sonorous idol that was being born in the heart of the musicians, where puritan prohibitions had trampled down the images. The symbol changes, to be sure, and therefore the idol, so that the pure cult of the spirit or objective knowledge may find a mooring not yet filled up by an illusion which had existed for too long. It is by renewing the idol that man regains his footing on solid ground, whether that idol is called Isis or Brahma, Osiris or Buddha, Athene or the Virgin Mother, Aphrodite or Huitzilopoctli, Dionysus or Jesus. Each is separated from the other by abysses of blood. And yet, when one of them falls into the abyss, the succeeding one, which caused it to fall, gathers to itself the love of mankind. The greatest moments of the spirit are those of idolatry, because from each we get one of the aspects of the definitive idol which we shall never carve. For this aspect, which the spirit created by eagerly studying the object and its own relationships with that object, comes to be neglected by the spirit, little by little, as soon as the latter has moved completely around the aspect, has traversed it in all directions, and found out that, now, the aspect has become an empty one. Thereupon the spirit seeks elsewhere, it reaches some spot where there is no longer any visible form, and finally adores itself in its immaterial essence until the day when, turning to emptiness, consumed by its passion, it seizes from the hot ashes of itself certain hard nuclei, veined with fire, in which it gradually per-

ceives new appearances. The soul of mankind does not increase itself, or at least does not find itself again, unless the matter of mankind transmit to it, through the contact of the senses with the matter of the universe, the soul of that matter, in which man's soul recognizes itself. What man adores in the idol is in no wise outside himself, neither is it in any wise outside the world of the senses, which is so made as to reveal to him his own sensibility. It incarnates his spiritual life in its ever-fleeting form. In it he seizes his power of renewing his qualities.

The invisible idol of the Jews, of the Puritans, of the Arabs, and of the Rationalism of the scientists has not been able to impose itself upon the multitudes by any means other than that of a grand literature or music, of an architecture storing up coolness, repose, and shadow at the limit of the waterless deserts where the flaming sun makes life impossible, or by means of a utilitarian system capable, at least provisionally, of satisfying the needs for well-being of the body and for conquest by the mind—idols which are no less deceptive, in the long run, than the visible idol; and they are less honest ones, I fear, since they promise definitive moral solutions which they cannot give. What incredible poverty on the part of the moralistic abstractors who, for centuries, impose by the sword the verbal idol of the Bible or the Koran to the exclusion of the others, and imagine themselves the possessors of the spirit in its purity! Iconoclasm reveals its strange misunderstanding of the conditions and of the means and even of the essence of the higher cult of the spirit. It annihilates a language whose letter alone strikes it, and which it does not understand. It is ignorant of the fact that form is an instrument from which are drawn spiritual harmonies as pure as those that one asks of the lyre, of the printed book, of the silence of a great soul, or of the liberating activity of a hero. And perhaps indeed it thus betrays its hatred of consciousness, as if it had an intuition that the idol which, as soon as it is really formed, represents the highest human peak of religious sentiment, is also, because it situates and describes that peak, the very point where consciousness (which is the first dawn of an idol in formation) will start its flight. The spirit, in order to increase and communicate its strength, has everywhere sought for material symbols wherewith to render it more accessible to the senses. When it has bound them one to another, and its new symbolic language is absolutely organized, this very language

brings the revelation of a universe of phenomena which wrests the spirit from its solitude. Iconoclasm, in this sense, is perhaps necessary, since it attempts to protect for the longest time possible the tabernacle of the spirit from contacts with the senses which first enervate it and dissolve it. But iconoclasm does not know that the spirit has been created by the idol and that the idol alone can re-create it. It is when the idol ceases to be beautiful that it may fittingly be broken.

An Aymara legend—the most beautiful of legends—has it that the creator peopled the world with statues and animated them in order to civilize the world. Is it really a legend? Being carried everywhere, from city to city, from shore to shore, across mountains and deserts, the idol everywhere introduced the spirit. It is civilization itself. It is the most universal and the most veracious of languages. Into an immediately concrete form, living, existent, insistent, and having a reality of its own, independent of the conventions which preside over articulate language, it translates the abstractions and the relationships which reveal the solidarity of things among themselves and of these things with us. A fetishism, continuing even to our days, was perhaps the one which fertilized Egypt and thereby the whole human race of the later time. The idol of the negroes entered, with the caravans, into the upper valley of the Nile, the rough idol, crudely carved from wood, sensual, terrible, daubed with red and blue and showing the attributes of sex, the ingenuous and bestial idol whose profiles were to become calm, whose planes were to become firm, whose surfaces would be made to undulate like limpid water, and which was to spring up in the thought of a charming race like a flower in the morning. If Egypt, now a withered branch, really issued from this, and, through Egypt, Greece and India, Asia and Europe, what do we not owe to it? What should we not have owed some day to its Polynesian sister, advancing from island to island on the prow of the painted canoes, peopling Easter Island with solitary colossi, and awaking America doubtless, if the Spanish idol, colliding with the Toltec idol, had not crushed the new world to dust and compelled it to accept the Occident? There are idols which die, certainly, and for ever. But sooner or later they are dug up, and sooner or later, in some civilization centuries old, they are the determining cause of a more or less deep-seated disturbance whose echoes are heard in the most distant future.

Observe now the course that is followed by those which encountered virgin races which were ingenuously awaiting love. See the Phoenician mariner landing on all the sandy shores of Africa and of Asia, at all the rocky coves of Europe, and displaying his gewgaws at the water's edge. See the circle, at first hostile or timid, of natives armed with flint, naked or dressed in skins of beasts, and approaching step by step, beguiled by the smile of the fat, curly-bearded face that is lit up by the red lips and the white teeth of the strange man dressed in purple whose arm, encircled with golden bracelets, turns this way and that a little figurine painted with ochre, vermilion, and azure. There are women in that circle, as you must not forget, who caress and beg, and also some exceptional beings, less noisy than the others, who wonder how that robe could have been dyed, that statuette could have been coloured, and that jewel melted and carved. Follow the Ionian fisherman also, prudently advancing in his little bark from island to island toward the shores of the Peloponnesus where the blond invader has burned and razed the cities, slaughtered the men, carried off the women, and smashed the old idols, and who is now astonished by this little dark man who had made him laugh at first and who now captivates him by reciting wonderful fables which agree with those which his shepherds bring back from the mountains and which are illustrated by painted images carved in olive wood, by potteries on which tentacles are twisted, where girls begin their dance and musicians begin to play. Give attention to the growth of their harmony as it reaches out to the temples covered with statues and with frescos, where the philosophers, bit by bit, surprise permanent relationships and equilibriums, the gliding of the spirit from surface to surface, and the articulation from form to form of logic and of calculation. Follow the pedlar who crosses the Apennines and descends into Etruria to display, to tribes enervated by a mysticism which does not nourish them, vases on whose background of flaming red there is the quick movement of black forms; see how the tribes bury those vases in their funerary vaults, after having silhouetted on their walls the shadows of those forms. Accompany the architect or the statue-maker from Attica when he is seized by some centurion who takes him by the collar and throws him into the military trireme, with his plans and his models which will thereafter furnish him his task of explaining them to the Roman engineer and marble-worker.

Install yourself behind the Macedonian phalanx, in the chariots which transport, with the baggage of the army, admirable women of tinted marble whose hair is of a reddish colour and whose nipples are brown, going to the bank of the Indus where multitudes, possessing no art, but intoxicated by sensual legends, await them in order to make them fecund, and with their children people the immense peninsula, and spread their genius, by the Buddhistic missionaries who think they are bringing nothing but their gentleness and their god, into Indo-China where gigantic temples will arise, into China where the cavern will take on movement, and even to the islands of Japan, where their trace will remain visible for centuries after the time of Jesus. Follow their course upon the other slope of the world, first to Byzantium, where they conceive the idea of clothing themselves in order to become more troubling, as they concentrate their terrible sexuality, mingled and kneaded with mind, in their fathomless eyes, their pallor, their painted mouths, and the jewels which clank on their arms and glow in their hair. You will see them reaching out thus to the two shores of the Adriatic, and around Florence and Siena, encountering and ardently embracing other images descended from the Gauls, and bearing in the folds of their robes, in their ingenuous smiles, in their direct and human gestures, and their discreet colours, a reflection of the stained glass left in the cathedral, so that they might there replace the carpets of which men had caught a glimpse at the time of the Crusades, the far away carpets of Iran on which the flowers of Persia and the gems of India are crushed together in the depths of the weave. After that, you will see them confronting their thin colours and their ripe forms with the thin forms stamped on strips of paper which are sold for a few coppers to the Patricians of Venice by German soldiers of fortune who are coming down from the Alps every day; and their colours are confronted with the ripe colours spread out on little canvases which Florentine bankers order in Bruges or in Ghent. I should never come to an end in following their Odyssey. To-day, through the sudden invasion of the immemorial idols of Africa, of Asia, and of America, the spiritual skeleton which the Helleno-Latin ancestor had bequeathed to us almost intact becomes broken or dislocated in order to permit all the rivers of the spirit to deposit their alluvia in our weakening energies.

Thus the idol pursues its march, always reborn, always integral, silent moreover, and affirming nothing but itself, among those contradictory or even antagonistic systems which die, one after the other, in their explicit claim to be the holders of the Truth. One religion is iconolatrous, another iconoclastic; this one is materialistic or realistic, that one is idealistic or devoted to the spirit; here is one that is sensual or indeed bestial, here is one that is moral or indeed ascetic; now love is exalted by one, now flouted by another; they condemn or glorify war, and are eager for the blood of victims or rebel at the shedding of blood. But all, at their great moment, even when they break an image, do so upon the authority of another image, verbal or musical, or plastic, most often, and by means of this image they plunge into the heart of men the definitive form in which History recognizes them. The idol is not alone the vehicle—it is also the governing test of the myth. What am I saying? The idol is, in reality, what creates the myth, or at least what renders it living and enthusiastic in our hearts. In the case of one of these myths (and doubtless the most human one) those very followers who were responsible for its most beautiful moments of energy and tenderness could not be convinced that their god was merely spirit until they had been transformed into accomplished idolaters. The birth of music, taking possession of the torrent of dull images which were circulating deep down in men's hearts, and spreading that torrent forth in all the directions of its rebounding waves, re-created Asiatic pantheism in the North. Mediterranean polytheism re-appeared in Italy by impressing wonderful visages upon all the morose passions whose mystic exploitation had smashed the ancient world. At the half-way point, in the French cathedral, the two met to encircle Christianity with such a murmur of life that its idols, which thought to lock up religion in the temple, plunged it back into the universe.

There, indeed, is the key to the mystery. Only the polytheistic or pantheistic religions create the idols and are created by the idols in a passionate and continuing exchange of ideas, of sensations, and of sentiments. The monotheistic religions, on the contrary, being hostile to the idol, either triumph with the help of the idol or else die where they have grown up, unable to renew themselves. For monotheism cuts the world into two irreconcilable

forms, thus ending in a terrible duality which, in the oscillations of the spirit in search of its sources, can lift it up for an hour and prevent it from perishing through the exercise over it of a kind of dictatorship, but which is quite incapable of achieving by itself the creation of one of those poetic edifices through which man, becoming conscious of his harmony with the world, is consoled. When God remains outside the forms, he is perforce the born enemy of the forms, which ceaselessly baffle his activity and which he tends to annihilate. To be sure, there exist everywhere, or at least there seem to exist everywhere, two essential forms facing each other which are called, according to the times and according to the places, according to the circumstances or the needs, god and nature, spirit and matter, body and soul, good and evil, reason and passion, intelligence and instinct, movement and form, male and female, or life and style. But dualism has always attempted to wrest them one from the other and to subordinate them one to the other for eternity. Whereas art, and that activity which is the art of living, conceive both of them as all-powerful and make them genuinely divine at the exceptional moments when, in the heart of the poet, of the hero, or sometimes of the crowd itself, the state of love multiplies them one by the other in a miraculous agreement. It is precisely the ethical religions (spoken of as so essential, so profound because they condemn appearances) that live according to the appearances of two antagonistic forces, whereas art, through appearances, which it loves, goes straight to unity.

Since this very unity is the highest and also the most consoling form of the religious sentiment, it is art, therefore and definitively, which gives to religion its most moving aspect. Religion is only the frame and the pretext for the creative energy of man as it reaches its summit and as it lends to him the enthusiasm which it draws up from the consciousness of itself. There is no "religious art." Any art is religious in its essence; and, with love doubtless—of which it is the spiritual flower—it is the sole creator and also the sole reliable evidence of that grand intoxication which moves mountains and which is called religion. It affirms the eternity of that religious spirit which precedes, includes, and buries the forms which it assumes in the sects, and it shows that they are masks placed upon its true countenance by the temporary needs of the instincts to be developed and the directions to be taken. Art plays

with the religions, tenderly, but with fury. It plays with the religions like that divine monster, the only one beloved, the only one knowing how to love, who sees in all women nothing but successive incarnations of love, and who leaves each one of them broken, bruised, and sometimes dead, but carried by his mere embrace to the summit of her true power, during the time that she belonged to him. Art, like that monster, is immoral, being indivisible and realizing in itself, by the mere fact that it is living, the cruel unity of life. It is the impassive idol which persists upon the desert and upon the tombs because it did not place the arid idea of moral perfection at the threshold of the knowledge of form; and, residing at the centre of the passions, of the antagonistic systems, and of the pathetic drama of action and of movement, it has sought its food within those struggling forces and shaped its bronze or its stone from their accepted contrasts.

The End

EPITAPH

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

This lad, when but a child of six,
Had learned how earth and heaven may mix—
At this so innocent an age
He, as light Ariel, trod the Stage;
So nimble-tongued, and silver-fleet,
Air, fire, did in one body meet.
Ay, had he hied to where the bones
Of Shakespeare sleep, 'neath Stratford's stones,
And whispered: "Master William!"—So.
One would have answered, Prospero.

IN A THICKET

BY GLENWAY WESCOTT

THE mist thinned and broke like a cobweb in the May sunshine. A young girl opened her eyes; through the window beside her bed they rested on a cloud of plum-trees in flower. The little house where she lived with her grandfather stood in a thicket of trees, blackberries, and vines. She saw the vapours gather as dew upon some cabbages and lettuce in the garden, and the black crooked trunks sustaining a weight of flowers.

She was troubled by a memory of the night in incomprehensible fragments. She had been aroused suddenly by sounds which her mind, confused with sleep, could not estimate. The moon, submerged in mist, had swept the cottage with a whirling and opaque atmosphere. She had lain still, her heart beating fast and loud.

Then, another movement, some footsteps on the porch. Seemingly padded, they were separated from one another by silence. Was it an animal? Too heavy for a cat, too elastic for a dog. Were there wilder beasts in the thicket? The door between her bedroom and the room opening upon the porch stood open. Her speculations died down with her breath. Something pressed upon the wire screen of the window. It brushed against the screen door, and seemed to shake it by the latch. It paced back and forth, a soft persistent prowling.

She trembled with curiosity and fear. An instinct warned her that it was not an ordinary thief. She would have liked to rise, to see, to know; her limbs would not respond. The night, both grey and dense, unnerved her.

Subdued noises and movements persisted irregularly for what must have been an hour. Once she heard them sweep across the grass to the backdoor, also hooked from within, and return. But her vigilance relaxed; waves of unconsciousness blotted out whole sounds and moments of hush; and suddenly she was awake in the tranquil sunshine.

In the kitchen her grandfather was moving in a pleasant odour of eggs and butter. For three years the orphan, now fifteen, had

lived with the old man—a schoolmaster whose needs had been so simple that he had saved, from the miserable salaries of many years, enough to provide for his old age and more. She found him on the porch, last autumn's wild cucumber vines flecking his face with shadows, his hands in his lap.

"Good morning, Lily," he said, in his sweet high voice.

"Good morning, gran'pa." She kissed his cheek where it was cool and like paper above the white beard, and crouched on the steps.

What little they had to do was as simple and solitary as a movement brought about by the sunlight, which dropped delicately upon fresh leaves, vegetables, the strawberry bed, grass, birds, and petals. They were shut off from the road, from noise and passers-by, from the sight of other houses, by the grove, which opened on one side only, on a wheat-field bounded by trees.

For two years Lily had not gone to the district school because of the age and remote dwelling of her grandfather, who taught her, easily and informally, at home, where she turned the pages of his library broodingly, with vague disappointment: books of history, letters, and particularly of natural history, such as the note-books of Audubon and Agassiz. Meanwhile he wandered in the grove or on the lawn, or farther afield. His hands clasped behind his back, he hummed and whistled. In the early twilight they worked together in the garden, upon the products of which, with those of the hen-coop and wild nuts and berries in season, they lived. His existence had shrunk into the circle of trees, and he was content with their noncommittal beauty, their concentration. But the girl's eyes sometimes ran darkly upon the horizon.

"Are you ready for breakfast, child?" the old man asked. When they had eaten, he polished his silver spectacles on a corner of the blue table-cloth, arose, and took down a Bible from a small shelf of its own. Slow and firm, he read a chapter of Revelations.

If there had ever been an interruption of this morning worship, Lily would have dreaded its return. To-day her emotion revealed itself more clearly, as if a carving in low relief had moved outward and detached itself from the stone. The tumult of coarse emotion and unknown crime which agitated the old text disturbed, even offended her. She remembered the night and the intruder. Her grandfather knelt by his chair, she by hers.

"Oh, dear heavenly Father," he prayed, "mould us to do thy will. Let our feet ever walk by the light which thou hast given us. Do not let them stray into temptation, or be stained by sin. Dear Father, we come to thee humbly, knowing we have been evil—covetous, quick to anger, lusting for power, licentious. Do not punish us according to our deeds, but forgive us according to the sacrifice of thy dearly beloved Son."

The girl's thoughts wandered, excited by the solemn beauty of his voice, by the obscurity of the words. What was it which had wakened her? What did it want? Where was it now? Should she ever see it, ever know?

"And bring us at last into thy heavenly house, to abide with thee for ever. Amen."

As Lily washed the few dishes and placed them on the lace-papered shelves, she heard voices on the piazza; and found her grandfather talking to Mrs Biggs, a woman who sometimes came to do their cleaning.

"And what had the man done?" he said.

With a cunning look at the girl, the woman ignored his question. Having stopped on her way to another farm-house to bring a piece of news, she felt obliged by the presence of this young sober creature to omit its details. She squinted at the sun, red hands upon her hips, and outlined the exciting but commonplace story.

A negro had escaped from the penitentiary. The state prison brooded over this countryside, a hideous fortress of red brick made more hideous by a row of trees planted against the walls. From tower to tower upon these walls guards walked, night and day; separated from the building by a bare courtyard in which every shadow was immediately visible. At night one of the towers upheld like a lighthouse a gigantic lamp, which twinkled into many bedroom windows, a reminder of something mysterious and submerged, over the forests, marshes, farms, and melancholy black dense hemp-fields.

Lily blanched and withdrew cautiously through the door.

The negro, imprisoned some years ago for a crime of violence, had seemed, in the prison, so subdued, so contented, that he had promptly become a privileged trusty. He drove the superintendent's car, and sometimes went about the town alone upon errands.

From time to time he displayed an internal excitement taken to be religious or even penitential, since it was indicated by a greater degree of gentle sadness and by low fitful singing of spirituals. It had been thought best to restrict his movement during these emotional fits; but the warden had sent him carelessly to the post office the day before. He had left the car less than a mile from the prison and disappeared.

Almost immediately the bewildered authorities swarmed over the country, expecting to take him by nightfall. But they were disappointed; the felon was still at large. He had been wandering around all night. He was loose now.

Lily was in a storm of excitement. It made nothing more clear; the relation of the news to her experience seemed insubstantial and incomplete; but she felt that the obscurities which had troubled her, the unknown, the difficult, the hypnotic, were to be revealed in a flash of light, emanating from Mrs Biggs. She shrank into a chair.

Mrs Biggs repeated each fact several times, panting with eagerness. She lowered her voice and rolled her eyes. But at last she reached the end of her information, and paused, discouraged.

The silent moments prolonged themselves in a twitter of birds and fowls. The old man sighed and stroked his beard. "Well, poor man," he said, "I suppose they'll catch him."

Mrs Biggs asked loudly, "Aren't you at all afraid?" For the second time the girl felt a surreptitious glance upon her.

"Oh, no," he returned mildly. "We are simple people, poor people. We have no money. We haven't anything he'd want."

Then, with something like timidity, she asked, "Do you like to live here in the thicket, so far back from the road? I've always wondered why you did it."

"Well, I don't know," was his absent reply. "I'm used to it. I've been here a long time. We don't get any noise and dust from automobiles, and the birds come here."

He descended slowly the verandah steps. Mrs Biggs hurried off with her burden of alarm; her shawl caught upon weeds and bushes. In the sunlight his beard glimmered beneath the honey locusts.

In the silence of the house Lily went about her interrupted tasks.

At dinner her grandfather was silent and aloof. He had his days of a preoccupation which the girl called "growing old." It arose within him, pure, unannounced, and unearthly, like the radiance which a candle-flame shoots through the wax beneath. She wondered if the negro's sad spells were like his. She knew that he had forgotten the morning's news, that he brooded upon nothing known to her.

As the afternoon passed by, a globe of light and fragrance, his mood deepened and darkened. For a year she had struggled to understand it, with only vague weak conclusions. Was it sadness at the expenditure of his life? Loneliness for those whose knowledge was simultaneous with his? Was it memory which troubled that mind like a pool, as if sunken things arose and floated on the surface?

His eyes seemed to turn away from the trees, clouds, birds, shadows, garden, away from her, to look within. He worked only a few minutes, but paced around the garden and sat in a wicker chair, shading his eyes with one hand.

Under the trees beside him the girl mended some clothes. Her courage sank low and lower, but persisted. The sun declined in the plum-trees. Acute rays came between the trunks of the thicket; those of the poplar became silver, the birch pink, the ironwood black. In silence the voices of some geese, trembling through the air, set up there a vibration like themselves.

She arose and kissed her grandfather; his face was smooth, cold, and frail to her lips. "A good girl," he murmured. Should she tell him about the night? For she was sure the negro would return. What was to keep him from coming in? Nothing, nothing at all.

As she thought of the situation she found resources in herself which she did not name. Her ignorance provided no concrete images to feed fear; and something within her implored the indefinite to break apart, to take shape. In her courage there was curiosity; in her curiosity, a challenge.

Night appeared in little flecks on the under-sides of leaves. Lily watched her grandfather. As twilight thickened, a similiar shadow seemed to gather within him, behind his eyes. He was unnaturally pallid—a mere shell separating two shadows. One day it would crumble; she would be alone, always alone, bodily alone, as she seemed then.

Suddenly she thought of the stranger with security. What harm could he do her? How could she be harmed? She saw him quite distinctly, not in person, but as a separate outline as small as her hand, singing to itself, and an embodiment of sadness.

It pleased her now to add reasons to her instinctive decision not to share the secret. Her grandfather was old and not strong; he would not understand; it would only frighten him and remind him of his deafness. Now it was too dark to sew, she folded the white cloths and laid them on the grass.

In the night she awoke and knew that the negro had come. As before, her body was already rigid, her heart accelerated. On the floor the moonlight fell in crisp rectangles. Some trees rose in columns from the lawn, seamless and abrupt. Between them the light clinked like a castanet.

The footsteps on the porch were undisguised and reckless. He fumbled at the screen door, at the windows. He scratched the wire tentatively with another metal, and ceased as if afraid of the noise. She arose in the bed upon her elbows. A deep sigh, sibilant against the teeth.

Her arms ached with tension. A great silence arose as a growing plant arises. Her imagination fixed upon it, half in terror, half in hope. It spread and shook out its leaves.

In the garden a tree toad tinkled to itself.

She slipped out of bed. Her night-gown swung about her ankles. As she crossed the moonlight her legs glimmered in the sheer cloth. A braid caught and slipped over the back of a chair. Her progress was slow and irregular, as if she wavered or floated. Not a board protested under her bare feet, upraised at the instep. Her eyes spread to admit something not yet apparent, and she was guided between chairs and tables by instinct.

The porch door thrust into the dark room a broad short blade of light. Lily skirted it, and saw the black man.

He was on the steps, his legs spread, his bare head bent enough to fix his gaze in the grey grass. He wore tennis-shoes, trousers, and a battered coat. Between its buttonless edges, the moonbeams rested on the close hard folds of his belly, like furrows turned by a chisel.

She had never seen a negro; separated from her by ten feet and a thin fabric of wire, he was not so black as her imagination of him. In the dead brilliance his cheeks glimmered softly, pallid

not in themselves, but as a surface burnished. Only a film of colour clung to his lips. He rested his chin within hands almost white across the palms, and turned his great white eyes toward her. The damp curled upward around her bare body.

Midnight passed. The two poised there side by side. Consciousness was suspended in the air; but it did not establish the contact which would have altered their relation. The moon slipped through the sky. Sometimes his sighs were clear; he seemed to breathe forth a single mysterious vowel.

She brushed against a pillow, which fell and settled heavily on the floor. Surely he would hear and come. The blood rushed to her head in a loud flood.

But he did not. His desires, the tentacles thrust outward toward something in that house, had been withdrawn; and gathered, in a knot almost visible, about some inner crisis. He rose abruptly, stretched himself, and strode away, over the grass. The dew plashed on his canvas shoes.

Before her grandfather came down stairs, she arose into a day lurid and insecure. Some robins worked upon the flagrant bright green sod. Everywhere were clots of colour and vortices of movement she had never seen. A superb thunderhead palpitated in the sky like a tree with black blossoms.

As she regarded it, a smaller sight arrested her: upon the screen door a gash three inches long, made by a wedge or chisel before she woke. She stared at the opening, from which the soft wire bent back neatly.

The old man, whistling like a boy, found her there. He did not see the trace upon the door.



Courtesy of the Weyhe Gallery

SALT AIR WANDERERS. BY ARTHUR B. DAVIES

C
An
pa
fal
Lo
On
ill-
and
you
eve
the
nex

due
Mr
Ye
Go
bro
a w
En
has
diff
the
tho
Mr

are
anc
best

U

IRISH LETTER

May, 1924

OUR dramatist, Colum, from whom we expected great things, has become an American; our critic, Boyd, has become an American; and to be an American is at least as difficult an occupation as those they hurried from in Dublin. And now, for woe falls on woe, Yeats is a senator, Russell is an editor, Moore is a Londoner, Gogarty is a demi-absentee, and Magee a foreigner. Once more Ireland is exporting her saints and scholars, and is but ill-comforted in retaining her senators, her editors, her republicans and sinners—her kittle cattle. The arena is being left to the young folk, and some of them are writing verse that one must be even younger to read. Five years hence, or even next year under the stimulus of O'Casey, our new dramatist (about whom more next month) they may be less tenuous.

As an interlude in hectic adventures Oliver Gogarty has produced a book of verse, *An Offering of Swans*, with a foreword by Mr Yeats (the Guala Press, Merrion Square, Dublin). Mr Yeats uses words delicately but definitely. He considers that Dr Gogarty's adventures and enforced absences in London have brought to him "a new sense of English lyric tradition, and changed a wit into a poet." Or, that Dr Gogarty's muse is more distinctly English than Irish. When he continues, that "Oliver Gogarty has discovered the rhythm of Herrick and of Fletcher, something different from himself and yet akin to himself," he emphasizes the first statement, and indicates in the "something different" a thought that he has not had space, or has not cared, to pursue. Mr Yeats ends with the statement:

"Here are a few pages that a few months have made, and there are careless lines now and again, traces of the old confused exuberance. He never stops long at his best, but how beautiful that best is, how noble, how joyous."

Used by Mr Yeats, such a sentence is more memorable, more to

be cherished by an author than many a column of flattery in a magazine. Mr Yeats names in special commendation three poems of this little collection: *Non Dolet*, *Begone Sweet Ghost*, and *Good Luck*. Only an amateur of bad luck or one who forges his own unhappiness will disagree in poetry with Mr Yeats, and yet there are poems in this book which I prefer to those he has chosen. In Irish verse the native critic looks for a singing quality inside the words used. This is a subtle vowel quality which is rarely found in English poetry. English poetry sings in the line, Irish sings in the word. Ferguson's

"Away in milky wanderings of neck and ankle bare"

is Irish. So too is Yeats's

"O Colleens, kneeling at your altar rails, long hence,"

or:

"I cried when the moon was murmuring to the birds,"

or:

"The honey-pale moon lay low on the sleepy hill,"

or George Russell's

"Where the Greyhound River windeth through a loneliness so deep,"

or:

"Fades the eve in dreamy fire."

When this quality of easy melody is not found in verse, the native critic is inclined to give the poetry to England. In the case of Dr Gogarty this seems to be both right and wrong. His poetry is not breathed in the Irish manner. It is more carved than flowing, but his master is Catullus rather than Herrick. I prefer his Per-

fection to any of the poems already named. In it his Latinity is fairly evident:

"By Perfection fooled too long
I will dream of that no longer!
Venus, you have done me wrong
By your unattainable beauty,
Till it seemed to be my duty
To belittle all the throng.
I have found attraction stronger;
I have found a lady younger
Who can make a hard heart stir:
Like an athlete, tall and slender,
With no more than human splendour;
Yet, for all the faults of her,
Than Perfection perfecter.

Though she guards it, grace breaks through
Every blithe and careless movement;
What shall I compare her to?
—When she takes the ball left-handed,
Speed and sweetness are so blended
Nothing awkward she can do,
She whose faults are an improvement!
—If she only knew what Love meant
I would not be seeking now
To describe the curved perfection
Of all loveliness in action—
Perfect she would be, I vow
With the mole above the brow."

In lines like

"But far off on the margin of the West
A sea-grey house whereby the blackbird sings"

the Celt in Dr Gogarty is already promising that if he can forget his scholarship he will remember his ancestors, and sing like a lark instead of like a musician.

His work in this small volume only fails when, as in Dunsany Castle, he remembers Wordsworth, or, on page ten, he remembers Milton, or when, as in *Amor* he shadows two beautiful verses by remembering that he is a wit in the third. Wit becomes a scholar, but it is a mark of ill-breeding in a poet; and the poet who can write

“ . . . timeless like a shrine
Upon the margin of a Grecian town
Where there is calm ”

need not condescend to sparkle.

Dr Gogarty is still a little the slave of his vast memory of Latin verse, English lyric, and Scotch ballad, and a little more he is the sport of a desire to assert his scholarship by remembering it. When he forgets these small matters he writes *Golden Stockings*, and writes himself into every anthology of poetry that is to come:

“Golden stockings you had on
In the meadow where you ran;
And your little knees together
Bobbed like pippins in the weather
When the breezes rush and fight
For those dimples of delight;
And they dance from the pursuit,
And the leaf looks like the fruit.

I have many a sight in mind
That would last if I were blind;
Many verses I could write
That would bring me many a sight:
Now I only see but one,
See you running in the sun;
And the gold-dust coming up
From the trampled butter-cup.”

He is the stoniest in form and the tenderest in heart of our poets.

Mr F. R. Higgins has published *Salt Air* (The Irish Bookshop: Dawson Street, Dublin). This young poet has still to strain from his ancestors or his contemporaries the poetry that is his, and which he undoubtedly has. The best poem in his tiny booklet is the one that is authentically his own—Connemara:

"The soft rain is falling
Round bushy isles.
Veiling the waters
Over wet miles
And hushing the grasses
Where plovers call,
While soft clouds are falling
Over all.

I pulled my new curragh
Through the clear sea
And left the brown sailings
Far behind me,
For who would not hurry
Down to the isle,
Where Una has lured me
With a smile.

She moves through her sheiling
Under the haws,
Her movements are softer
Than kittens' paws;
And shiny blackberries
Sweeten the rain,
Where I haunt her beaded
Window-pane

I would she were heeding—
Keeping my tryst—
That soft moon of amber
Blurred in the mist,
And rising the plovers

Where salleys fall,
Till slumbers come hushing
One and all."

His other poems must be taken as very interesting experiments of his muse, and as promise of good poetry to come. It is not so much that this singer is a disciple of any one, but that he is dwelling in moods of languor and wistfulness that are out-moded. But the poet who can write

" . . . cold men herding swine
By wasted seas,
Was captured in his singing—
But where's Beauty's joy,
While Beauty's dust is clinging
To a lonely cairn in Connacht
And a burning wind from Troy"

can learn to discover himself, and can learn to leave Helen and Troy where they belong, to the studio, that is.

JAMES STEPHENS

VIENNA LETTER

May, 1924

THE most notable event which has taken place in the field of art here since my last letter to *THE DIAL*, and the one most worth announcing in the West, is undoubtedly the appearance of a new lyric poet, Richard Billinger. His distinction lies in the fact that he is the son of an Austrian peasant and that his poems confine themselves to feelings and ideas characteristic of this class, while displaying in their treatment of the subject such great strength and powerful originality that they must be considered as positively "high art." But perhaps I should try in a few words to explain what an Austrian peasant is. The cinema, which mediates between such diverse parts of the world and unites them in some mysterious feeling of contemporaneity, has shown the Russian moujik to the American farmer, and the American farmer to the Russian moujik. The peasant who inhabits the hills and mountains of the Austrian Alps—which is to say, upper and lower Austria, the Salzburg crownland, the Tyrol, Steiermark, and Carinthia—is now about equally removed from both the farmer and the moujik. He is more like the farmer in so far as he is completely abreast of the times, with a consciousness of modern problems which has been greatly extended by the war: in so far as he is well aware of his political and cultural importance, and knows how to utilize the machinery of legislation with full security. Yet he is much more closely allied to the moujik through the simplicity and the traditionalism in his manner of living, and through the important circumstance that his relation to the soil, to his own piece of ground, is far more religious and mystic than a merely commercial or industrial one. The utensils which he lives among, and even his tools and the furniture of his house, have hardly changed their form for half a millenium. The marriage bed, the fireplace, stand on the same spot as the plan of the house has assigned to them since the Middle Ages. The scythes and axes are still hanging where they hung in the times of the Hohenstaufen and the earlier Hapsburgs; the prayer-book lies in the same place as it has lain since the dis-

covery of printing; in an ancient closet, or perhaps in an ancient chest, the holiday clothes are still lying and hanging, and in cut and colour they are the same as those in which their forefathers celebrated the liberation of the country from the Turkish menace or from the great plague of the year 1677. The word "conservative" as applied to such lives has a quite different connotation from the stupid, shallow one which we associate with it in political phraseology.

It is only natural that this class should have produced many artists from generation to generation. For the phenomenon of art arises precisely at that point when, from a long line of descendants in whose closed existences the symbols for everything of importance have become hard and fast, an individual steps forth into the free atmosphere of the world and with a conscious freedom makes use of these symbols stored up within him. In this generation also, two of the three important artists whom Austria has added to the guild of Europe's painters are of this peasant origin: Anton Faistauer and Franz Wiesel. And only one, Kokoschka (who for the time being is the most famous of them all) is a Viennese. If the gift for art which is stored up in all these lonely valleys seizes on the mysterious inner meaning of things—instead of unburdening itself through the hand, by the brush or the woodcutter's knife—then a poet results, while his talent usually remains in the sphere of dialect, which is close to the soil and is, we might say, still accessible to its nightly resuscitation, its dew. For with us Europeans dialect is by no means the speech of the upper classes in a state of shoddy and unbeautiful corruption, but it is the code of primitive natural sounds whence the speech of the intellectuals is continually drawing new life. But in this case, in the case of this young and astonishing peasant poet, Richard Billinger, it is written German, the high language of literature, in which, with the sureness of genius, things are spoken and images evoked that belong completely to these relatively childish peasant subjects. The language itself, whose treatment is the very alpha and omega of poetic art, attains thereby a naïve luminous freshness, and on occasions a sinister and almost brutal hardness which is unparalleled. I am disturbed at the realization of how futile it is to attempt giving a report of lyric poetry. One of Billinger's two thin volumes of verse lies before me; I open to one poem and see that it defies any attempt of mine to explain its beauty, and would

equally defy any attempt at translation. The poem is called *Der Mondsüchtige* (The Moon-struck). It has precisely that medium length which is most suited to a strong lyric inspiration—the length preferred by Poe, who knew the secrets of lyric beauty as few others. It has eight rhymed strophes of four lines each. The rhythm, the play of rise and fall, is without technical peculiarity: naïve and almost monotonous. But even this naïve monotony has an incomparable power to depict those strange eerie things he wishes to depict here: the trance of a peasant child who rises from his bed in the night of the full moon, walks in his night-shirt, and roams around on the shingled roof. But the real virtue of the poem lies in its vision of the world as seen through these childish eyes staring in their trance. It is a double vision: first the view of the cramped house groaning in the night wind, where everything is ominous and uncanny (uncannily the oven crouches with its dying glow; the dining-table stands there ghostlike, and begins to set itself for a meal in the silence of the night: a broken plate, a jagged knife, bent forks, a mouldy loaf of bread—and no hand to bring these things; the table itself does this) and then the view out in the open as seen from the roof bathed in light, the splendid uncanny vision of the moonlight night (the softly cooing dove; the complaining owl; the mist slipping across the fields; the almost singing green of the meadows—for under the fullest moon the grass is not black, but green again—and the cross on the church tower, reaching up towards heaven in a fervour of prayer)—finally the neighbour down below, who stares up anxiously at the sleep-walking child, then runs and gets the ladder; and most of all, the child, elusive, running and hopping on the shingles, which kiss his feet and bear up under him like the floor of God's paradise.

Since my last letter, Reinhardt has been in America and has displayed one aspect of his many-sided nature. He is by no means a person of one experiment, by no means the man to let caprice or accident play any part in his artistic development; rather, he is deliberate, and is patient in his thoughts and actions. As a consequence, America will undoubtedly see him oftener from now on, and will become acquainted with other facets of his personality. But in the meantime he will return here again, and will continue an enterprise which he is about to inaugurate: the theatre in the Josephstadt (Josephstadt is a part of Vienna, and the theatre situated there is an intimate theatre for about eight

hundred people, built approximately a hundred years ago and open without interruption ever since)—or, to designate it by the exact title which he himself has chosen for it, The Theatre of the Actors of the Josephstadt, under the direction of Max Reinhardt. While America has seen him first as a producer in the grand style, as the stage-director of crowds, as the rhythmist of space and light, here he will function first in a capacity which is no less important, and is perhaps more significant and effective for the theatre of his own country: as the discoverer and trainer of new actors. In these last twenty years a whole generation of actors has issued from his hands. Some of these also he has engaged, and they will appear here in succession: Werner Kraus as well as Moissi, Pallenberg as well as Eugen Klöpfer. Undoubtedly he will put new problems up to them, and will discover in them and bring to light possibilities which they themselves had never been quite conscious of. He was the first to draw from the most powerful comedian of the Central-European stage, from Pallenberg, those accents which do not merely touch on the tragic, but extend deep within it. And I know that he is waiting impatiently to give Alexander Moissi, the strongest Hamlet and Oedipus Rex of the modern stage, a part belonging entirely in the realm of comedy; although it will be high comedy, of course, and penetrated by a tragic irony. I refer to the figure of Hjalmar Ekdal in Ibsen's *Wild Duck*. But if I know him rightly, there is one task which will attract him still more than that of striking new sparks of a hitherto unknown colour from previously forged steel. This is the awakening and the formation of new talents, the gathering of young men and women from all possible walks of life, to make actors of them or to throw into relief—to their own astonishment—the actor which, unknown to them, is latent within them. He cannot stop after the two tentatives which seem to have succeeded so astonishingly well with him in *The Miracle* (in the case of Lady Diana Manners and the young American, Miss Pinchot). And if the good fortune which every productive man must command to a degree in his sphere of work does not desert him, then the little house in the Josephstadt will bear a new generation of remarkable actors whose names will be famous in ten years. It is a good place for such an experiment, this little house; it is built like the casing of a violin, and capable of giving a full resonance to every slight nuance of a good actor,

every smile or delicate emotional shading of the voice. And much good drama has been given in this theatre since those days more than a hundred years ago when Beethoven wrote and personally directed his overture, *Die Weihe des Hauses*, at the formal opening of this very playhouse. Richard Strauss, who has been in close artistic alliance with Max Reinhardt for many years, will now stand on the same conductor's rostrum. And it was planned at first that he should give this same overture for the second time after a hundred years. But perhaps in place of the Beethoven, a light and cheerful Mozart symphony will be chosen in order to be perfectly in keeping with the light and cheerful comedy which has been chosen for the opening evening: Goldoni's farce, *A Servant of Two Masters*, with the Venetian *maschere* of the eighteenth century, Truffaldino, Pantalone, Smeraldine, and so on. By opening his season with a comedy of this sort, where the play is almost nothing and the actor really everything, Reinhardt repeats in a still more unmistakable manner the indication which he has already given in the title to his new theatrical enterprise, that he wants to found a kind of "Associates' Theatre," and not at all the theatre of one great egoistic director. This lively type of comedy (in English it is called "formal comedy") has been deeply rooted in Vienna for the last five generations; but while it will have an important place in his repertoire, it will by no means predominate. This first evening will be followed by three others; and all four together will represent the four cardinal directions in which the theatre will extend. On the second evening *Kabale und Liebe* will be given; it is one of Schiller's early dramas, and thus is in the style of the older high pathos. The third evening he will stage a comedy by me, which is to represent the line of modern society drama. On the fourth, the *Dream Play* of Strindberg, as a representative of the modern fantastic piece. He will exclude from this theatre all plays whose scope and dynamics are in opposition to an intimate house, such as *Julius Caesar*, or *King Lear*, or miracle plays like *The Great World Theatre*. He has shown me the list of pieces he proposes for the next eighteen months, and I can say that it is a list of wide sympathies. It contains things by Galsworthy, Sutton Vane, and A. A. Milne; also, Paul Grraldy's *Aimer*, and the *Maître de Son Cœur* by that interesting author Paul Raynal whose *Tombeau Sous l'Arc de Triomphe* has provoked so much contention in Paris; several

Russians, with Chekhov among them, of course; Anna Christie by Eugene O'Neill—these by living authors, not to mention works of the past from Shakespeare to Strindberg. Besides several works of my own I see only one other piece included by a living writer in the German language: Das Apostelspiel by the young Austrian poet Max Mell. In this play everything is strange and peculiar, and I predict that it will have a very great success.

Reinhardt has naturally discussed with his friends here whether he should arrange for a kind of official announcement on the first evening to explain the serious ambitions which are determining the establishment of his Vienna theatre and which demand a repertoire at once restricted and aspiring, a very subtle and intimate style of drama divorced from Berlin realism. And at his request I had already begun writing a kind of scenic prologue. I wanted to take one character from each of the four plays which I have enumerated above and which represent four different *genres*; these four characters were to give something like a statement of principles and at the same time convey a sense of this important moment in the history of the theatre. For it certainly is an important moment when Reinhardt returns to Austria whence his entire art derives (during all his twenty-three years of stage-directing he has always appeared in Vienna simply as a guest; and now for the first time he comes before the Viennese in his own house as a Viennese director). But a prologue of this sort would naturally have had to pronounce matters of theory with a certain gravity and a certain solemnity; so that it did not seem to us suitable for the light atmosphere of the *commedia dell' arte* to which his first evening is devoted. So we renounced the idea of unfolding a highly serious programme *expressis verbis* and of making promises; and we agreed on a light scenic prelude, a mere "Greeting Before the Curtain," which will have the same note of improvisation as everything in the comedy itself. Also, this form permits me to point out in a modest manner the distinctive features of the situation: namely, the opening (in an old building in this old theatrical city) of a new theatre with ambitions which are pretentious, but along theatrical rather than literary lines.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

BOOK REVIEWS

DISINTEGRATION IN MODERN POETRY

BIRDS, BEASTS AND FLOWERS. By D. H. Lawrence.

8vo. 180 pages. Thomas Seltzer. \$2.50.

ONE cannot be indifferent to a book by Mr Lawrence. He is very much alive in his own very peculiar way. If he is recklessly unequal, uncontrolled, one must add that even at his worst he is interesting; and at his best, in prose, he is decidedly the most living and "possible" of contemporary writers of English fiction. One does not guess where he will go. His novels are never wholly satisfactory—they are not good works of art. Almost uniformly they show a tendency to break in two, their construction is faulty, incredibilities are indulged in, and at some vital point in each the credulity of the reader is for ever lost. It has long been apparent that Mr Lawrence is a man obsessed, unable to conceal his obsession; sex-crucifixion is his iterated theme; and he displays in all his work, verse and prose, the sensitive fierceness, the sadistic awareness, which almost invariably accompanies this type of obsession. He is an Erisichthon: tears wolfishly not only at his own flesh, but also at the world which, inevitably, he has created in his own image. In his novels, at the dictation of this fever, he sublimates his characters into types; and one watches him, over and over, luxuriating in the last pang of ecstasy at his subjugation, so richly arranged and so intensely pitched, of the cold tall blond "Arctic" type (which has a predilection for Alps) by the swart furry animal "Mediterranean" type (which has a predilection for underworlds and darkness). Latterly, also, one observes a somewhat disquietingly increased effort towards a rationalization of this obsessive "world"—a rationalization irrational and clumsy, a muddy psychoanalytic mysticism, full of meaningless jargon and highly "affective" logic. One sympathizes with Mr Lawrence, and hopes that he will find his way out, solve his problem, discover peace; but one is bored

and incredulous; and one prefers his solution when it is in narrative form, a parable.

One sums up one's feeling, in all this, by simply saying that Mr Lawrence is a man of genius, but of that sort which lacks sufficient self-control and self-awareness. This fact has been as manifest in his verse as in his prose, perhaps more so; and his latest excursion into verse, in which one sees him quite perceptibly deflected by Whitman, is no exception. *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* is not a wholly successful book. Taken simply as description, some of Mr Lawrence's birds, beasts, flowers, and prophets are, as one would expect, intensely vivid. The baby tortoise, seen as a "Tiny, fragile, half-animate bean," "Rather like a baby working its limbs"; the mother tortoise "Taking bread in her curved, gaping, toothless mouth"; the father tortoise, "tupping like a jerking leap, and oh! opening its clenched face from his (*sic*) outstretched neck and giving that fragile yell, that scream, super-audible from his pink, cleft, old-man's mouth, giving up the ghost, or screaming in Pentecost, receiving the ghost"; the mountain lioness with "her bright striped frost-face"; the snake who "sipped with his straight mouth, softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body, silently"; the cyclamens, "Like delicate very young greyhound bitches, half-yawning . . . folding back their soundless petalled ears"; and the "weird fig-trees, made of thick smooth silver, made of sweet untarnished silver in the sea-southern air—I say untarnished, but I mean opaque"; all these are excellent bits of descriptive prose, sharp and exact, and one could cite a good many others. But their excellence, it must be insisted, is a prose excellence, level, cumulative, explanatory; only infrequently in his book does Mr Lawrence substitute for this method the method of poetry, with its sharp brief suggestion, its "*vox et praeterea nihil*," and its total elimination of the personal presence—everywhere else so manifest—of Mr Lawrence; Mr Lawrence in an old suit of clothes, affable, informative, speculative, a little inclined to be facetious, now and then somewhat cheap, and often dull.

And it is of this relaxed personal presence that one is, after all, most tiresomely aware in Mr Lawrence's book. In general these poems are verbose; a piling up of descriptive epithets, a stringing together, in opposition, of words curiously strained and forced, images strained and conscious. This prolixity, now and then brin-

dled with vividness or mere idiosyncrasy (verbal or affective) finally makes one wonder whether it is the display of a kind of literary vanity. Mr Lawrence appears to believe that all that is necessary for him is to "spill" his consciousness. If there is any selection or arrangement at work at all, it is not enough in any poem here printed to make of it a work of art. It remains simply a kind of amusing chatty comment, under which one perceives that Mr Lawrence's aim is simply the assertion of his personality. Perhaps he caught this from Whitman? At all events it is a common form of aesthetic error at present, and worth examination.

It is customary, in discussions of art, to use the terms objective and subjective. Strictly speaking the distinction is indefensible, for no work of art, however "objective" in appearance, can be anything but the artist's self-portrait. But the distinction can have a clear validity if we define it: and we must define it as meaning that the ideal "objective" artist is one who, in the production of his self-portrait, employs affective terms—symbolisms of theme and form—which are universally significant and intelligible; whereas the ideal "subjective" artist is one who in the production of his self-portrait employs affective terms (of theme and form) significant and intelligible only to himself. Of course, the ideal objective artist is an impossibility—the ideal subjective artist a lunatic. Or one may put it in another way: that the objective artist's psychosis corresponds at a maximum number of points with the "average" psychosis of mankind, whereas the subjective artist's psychosis is peculiar to himself. Again: the objective artist, in whom a sense of reality is relatively mature, is aware of and understands the psychotic needs of mankind, and endeavours to be as useful to his audience as to himself; but the subjective artist, in whom the sense of reality remains infantile, disregards and scorns his audience, and considers himself a god, the only true source of wisdom, the only true centre of awareness. With these relative distinctions in mind, it is easy to see that in what we are accustomed to call the "disintegration" of the arts during the last decade we witness a very marked movement away from the objective (in our sense) and towards the subjective. In Cubism, Vorticism, Expressionism, and Dadaism, the emphatic common factor is the marked increase in the solipsism of the artist, accompanied as we should expect, by a more or less complete breaking up of established forms and symbols, and

a conscious contempt for manifest intelligibility. We are assured by psychologists that this breaking up, accompanied as it curiously is by a distinct historical regression, or return to the primitive, is a good thing, and is necessary periodically if art is to remain "healthy" and to "develop." But we are also assured that the actual work produced at the moment of regression—poetry, for example, in which the holophrastic method is reverted to; sculpture which is pre-cultural or negroid; or, in general, the reversion to a primitive ritualism—is, naturally, infantile; and is only of use as the starting-point for a renewal of growth, which would perhaps take the form of a gradual selection and refinement of *valid* symbols from amid the mass of the *invalid*. At its lowest, there can be no distinction between this art and the art of the definitely insane. It is hardly a step from the compulsive iterations of religious mania to the stammerings of Miss Gertrude Stein, or Mr Pound's "Spring . . . Too long . . . Gongula"; and even so fine a poem as Mr Eliot's *Waste Land* is not untainted. That the "latent" meaning may be, for the artist himself, tremendously rich, dazzlingly illuminating, and highly organized, makes no difference, if this meaning is not successfully conveyed. Dr Pfister, in his *Expressionism in Art*, observes:

" . . . there is no doubt that the expressionist often chooses his colours not on account of their character as felt by men in general, but . . . on the strength of repressed experiences and fancies of which other men cannot have any idea."

He also cites the analogous case of a youth, suffering from cryptolalia, who

"felt himself compelled . . . to fill up . . . whole volumes with written characters that resembled shorthand, the Morse code, or exotic scripts. An incredible number of perfectly elaborated systems were at his disposal, but not one was intelligible. Only on closer investigation it became evident that there really existed a *system full of meaning* . . . a regular artificial language, *but inexplicable to consciousness*."

If now we keep some such reflections or speculations as these in

mind; and if we keep in mind also the fact that we have no right to attribute any "absolute" badness to the ideal subjective work of art, or absolute goodness to the objective; if we reflect further that the practical test of "successful communication" compels us to accept Sir Hall Caine, Mr Harold Bell Wright, and Mr Robert Service as the greatest living artists; and if we add to this the often demonstrated fact that (representing subjective as *a* and objective as *b*) a work of art may be in its own generation *a-2*, but, five or ten generations later, *b-2*; then we are in a position to contemplate with some freedom any such particular specimens of the contemporary disintegration, or reintegration, of poetry as these poems by Mr Lawrence. It is clear that we must put Mr Lawrence pretty far towards the subjective end of the scale. We have already seen, and taken as our point of departure for speculation, the fact that the "relaxed personal presence" is one of the most striking features of these poems; a fact which clearly corresponds with the common expressionist view that unexplained confession, direct or in symbolism, is sufficient. But we can now object to this that if the mere presentation of his own personality is to satisfy us, we must insist that the personality should (1) be one of genius; (2) with a decided gift for communication; and (3) unconscious partly or wholly of the extent to which it merely communicates *itself*. The latter point is important. We enjoy, in a work of art, the overtone or aroma of personality; but the deliberate exploitation of personality, as Whitman exploited it, is apt to be otiose, if not repellent. The real "ghost" is lost in the process of elaborate dishevelment, and all that remains is a parade of irritating superficialities, and perhaps a considerable vanity. In Mr Lawrence's case, we find this result conspicuous. And, in addition, we find him a little tiresomely idiosyncratic in a way we suggested earlier: i.e. sex-crucifixion. In this regard, too, he is well along towards the subjective maximum. He sees the world exclusively in terms of a personality which is an obsessed one, and which has in some respects remained infantile. Figs, tortoises, goats, dogs, flowers—all, to Mr Lawrence, writhe in sex-martyrdom. Even the harmless, necessary moon is adjured in rising to burst the membrane of the stars, and

"Maculate
The red macula."

Finally, as regards form, it remains to be observed that Mr Lawrence has carried disintegration a long way back, and has only in a few instances taken a new step forward from the point of rest. For the most part his structure is casual, slipshod, and rhythmless, or, as said earlier, a prose structure. In this, too, it is to be feared that he speaks too idiosyncratic a language—his “formal” symbols are not likely to be found either widely or intensely valid, now or later. Or so, at any rate, one dares to guess.

CONRAD AIKEN

E
str
abl
sur
pro
rev
fin
Th
kee
fir
to
the
dep
sup
I
con
not
enc
of
Th
int
tas
sail
to
the
wh
of
in
occ
lar
tain

A POPULAR NOVEL

THE ROVER. By *Joseph Conrad*. 12mo. 286 pages.
Doubleday, Page and Company. \$2.

BY this time the popularity of Joseph Conrad is a phenomenon more interesting than the particular novel which has so strikingly given proof of it. The Rover was launched in a favourable wind; it swept along, and the number of copies sold is large, surprisingly large for an author who only a few years ago was the property of the few. The book was warmly received by book-reviewers; a few daring and thoughtless ones put it among Conrad's finest novels; there was also an undercurrent of dissatisfaction. The method was not that of *Youth*, the happy ending was not in keeping with the author's custom, the book lacked the glowing fire of even *The Rescue*. Mr Conrad is supposed to have taken to heart the public which has earnestly tried to like him; and at the same time embracing by a clever stroke the critics who deplored the indirect method of narrative he used to use, he is supposed to have become a better artist and a popular novelist.

In itself this is not an impossibility, and if an artist can so compact with his double conscience, not an impropriety. I am not, however, sure that it all happened so simply. The happy ending is less happy than that of *Chance*; the sacrifice and death of Peyrol corresponds precisely to the tragic end of Lord Jim. The fact that Réal, a shadowy character of no great personal interest, marries Arlette, constitutes no concession to the popular taste; it is the logical fulfilment of Peyrol's intention when he sails his tartan into the hands of the English. There is further to be noted the severity of the style of *The Rover*. One recalls the opening pages of *Victory*, and nearly all of *The Secret Agent*—where Mr Conrad's irony expressed itself not in the movements of human creatures against the background of their destiny, but in verbal felicities which are trivial and forced. None of these occur in the austerity of *The Rover*. Had the author had popularity in mind when he wrote it, he would have made it more entertaining to read. The direct narration of events is an experiment

Conrad has tried before; I do not recall any great success in it, nor is *The Rover* one. It is one of the few novels by him in which I was never able to take a passionate interest. The outer framework may be clear and neat; internally it is muddled. The background of *Escampobar* on which the passions of the French Revolution should appear, is all confusion to me, giving no contours to the simple legend of the rover himself. And even that legend proceeding steadily and certainly, has not the assured and impassioned freedom of gait which the great novels of Conrad possess.

The popularity of *The Rover* is, therefore, all the more interesting because it seems not deliberately designed by the author. There is, necessarily, the element of skilful promotion; since the days of *Victory* it has been clear that Conrad could be made a popular author; *The Shadow Line* and *The Arrow of Gold* aided little, *The Rescue* more. The appearance of a novel praised by the press, yet presenting few of the author's idiosyncrasies and difficulties, was destined to end doubt and make assurance sure. One might say that it is a pity for Conrad to become popular with a novel of his second order. But there is another circumstance.

It is certain that in the past ten years the whole of his work has been read, widely; and in it many who for years were ignorant of it discovered a great novelist. They discovered also a novelist distant in spirit from our direct contemporaries. He is a romancer, not a satirist, and his preoccupation is a moral, not a social, one. The two things go seldom together; where the framework is melodrama the moral tone is usually high, but the moral interest lacks intensity. In Conrad the drama moves magnificently; deep within it there is almost always a case of conscience. You find it in such narratives as *The Duel*, and *Typhoon*; and whenever the moral predicament has no great gravity, as in *The Rover*, the result is weak. For it is only when Conrad is engaged in a dilemma that he has the power of creation which for him as for many others means the power to create a separate world in which events and characters have life, almost without reference to the logic of our events and the limitations of our characters. He has used the device of the narrator, as James that of the ideal spectator, to remove his world by one step, to set himself at once free of the ground. It has mattered very little in the end that the

device existed; the main thing was that he always had the impulse to create, and the power.

And I think that that is why he has eventually become a popular writer; that the root of the matter is in him, that he knows what a novel is, what the creative imagination is, and knows it "by works." The creative capacity, in whatever degree it exists nowadays, tends to belittle itself, to attach itself to ideas, to criticize or satirize, to do anything in short but make the effort to soar. It was Conrad's good fortune to have made the effort many years ago; it would be impossible for him to do anything else now. And the duration and ease of his flight, however they vary from one book to another, are secondary considerations. He is still an eagle, and not a beast of burden.

GILBERT SELDES

PORT OF NEW YORK

PORT OF NEW YORK, Essays on Fourteen American Moderns. By Paul Rosenfeld. 12mo. 311 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$3.

PAUL ROSENFELD is a fortunate gift to American critical literature. Into our boneyard of erudition and theoretical writing he pours the excitement of music and paint, of sounds and colours and words joyfully apprehended. These are his life. Unlike the people who wander through exhibitions making memoranda, he has bought and lived with paintings; as he has lived with his piano and music. No writer among us has given works of art such opportunity to fire him to enthusiasm and perception.

We have had two books from him reflecting in terms of music the life of our day. His new book, *Port of New York*, shows how diverse were his friendships and responses among the arts, how broad the scope which made the earlier books so vivid, untechnical, and poetic. Painters and writers, photographers, educators, poets as well as musicians, are the beings to whom Paul Rosenfeld has been friend, finding in their lives and work a validation of our land; himself the most variously cultivated among all our critics.

Fourteen spirits have made him rejoice in America. For him they bridge the void that had existed between European mellow-ness and the crass scramble of American Business. "Through words, lights, colors, the new world has been reached at last. We have to thank a few people—for the gift that is likest the gift of life." His fourteen people he makes no pretence to singling out as all, or the only, artists in America. But they gave him at various times, "the happy sense of a new spirit dawning in American life, and awakened a sense of wealth, of confidence, and of power which was not there before."

What the quality of that new spirit is, the essays tell. Albert H. Ryder, Paul Rosenfeld finds the first expression of America in paint. Ryder it was who gave form to the vague restlessness of the American pioneer soul, the evading desire and Flying

Dutchman aspect of existence. With Ryder, we are told, this aspect of the American journey ends. We are landed. Then there is Van Wyck Brooks, our "stiff little colonel of letters," who fought with a moralist's exaltation, against our dreary wastefulness, for the right of young expression—though of late he has been neglecting the young expressers. In Carl Sandburg is the lover of life, helping us to accept even the crass ugliness of the mid-West. "What Synge did with the language of the Gaelic peasantry, this lean, slouching, stogy-smoking newspaperman is commencing to do with that of the American townspeople"; though much of Sandburg's work is incomplete and he sometimes lets himself down easy. New England gives us Marsden Hartley, master of a strange, a mysterious elegance; an Alexandrian in our midst. The drab greys of life find acidulous acceptance in William Carlos Williams, as poet, and in the sober painting of Kenneth Hayes Miller. John Marin is triumphant realization of the Yankee, brother under the skin to the Chinese masters of wash; Arthur G. Dove gives us a native lyricism of the soil. And Georgia O'Keeffe is the truth of woman, a liberating force in colour music. The ironic musical cultivation of Roger H. Sessions represents musical values; and Margaret Naumburg's sensitive appreciation of children's growth, education. In letters there is the gay, lost leader, Randolph Bourne, a victim of war spirit; and Sherwood Anderson, maker of our sagas. The last essay interprets the American photographer and burning spiritual force, Alfred Stieglitz; the epilogue being given to the port of New York, warmly viewed and newly accepted for the presence on the continent of these fourteen people.

Paul Rosenfeld endeavoured mainly, it seems, to infuse his characterization with the flavour of his delight, and the pungency of his experience of people. The painters, Hartley and Marin and O'Keeffe, are caught in moments of word portraiture so breathlessly fine that for those who have known their work it seems echoed in another medium. How large and round the conception of John Marin, Yankee and Puck and Ionian seer in one, who "feels a cosmos composed of sand and fire, air and water, fire drawing water into floating mist, water returning to earth again in warm rain, endless mystic glittering cycles of life and death"; this man who, like an apple tree toughly rooted in American soil, strews about him "his explosions of tart water

color; slithering suns and racing seas of the coast of Maine; wet, fishy poems of headlands and pine-pinnacles." What a masterly portrait of Sherwood Anderson, voice of our Middle West struggling for selfhood, transfiguring the common words of American streets, "the man who looks like a racing tout and a divine poet, like a movie-actor and a young priest, like a bartender, a businessman, a hayseed, a mama's boy, a satyr, and an old sit-by-the-stove."

Not only have we no other American writer who could have come so close to these intensely diverse persons; no one else wields such insidious colours and flavours and odours, sensuous entities evoked in words, as Paul Rosenfeld. The defects of his writing are a product of its merits: the gift of himself entire, and his enthusiasm. In search for verbal equivalents for what he has experienced, he offends, wilfully, the proprieties. So, he uses "palp" as a verb in various tenses, for touch. Sometimes his enthusiasm is not entirely mastered. In the effort to describe Albert Ryder's painting, he begins a sentence with "Dullest gold of night-cloud edge . . ." and ends it with "the aureate brown of embossed leathers." It is followed by an inchoate moment: "The utmost reaches in vibrance in the gorgeous, fissured rectangles are rose-violets of the ultimate agony of day in the west, and rims of light pale as the greening skies of the afterglow." The essay on Ryder too is burdened with the words "hushfulness" and "clashfulness," fraternizing uncomfortably in one sentence with the word "dreamful." Such passages, and others, of verbal paste, of prose dulled by reiteration and by the effort to evoke utter ecstasies not fully supported by the architecture of English, clog his fine pages.

In some of its painter values, too, the book lacks sureness. It was careless to write of the exquisite Marsden Hartley that his restlessness suggested Van Gogh, for no two painters could be named less related in any sense. Also, the theory that a canvas symbolizes a woman's body—incompletion of foreground forms implying sexual fear—might well have been offered with less insistence; especially as Paul Rosenfeld stretches it to justify the work of a minor painter, Hayes Miller, whose "forms surge directly from the lower edges," et cetera.

But these and other faults of the book are far outweighed by

the brilliant achievement which it represents. It is a new and richer sort of critical writing than that of the older men, Brooks for example—the essay on Brooks being in itself a firm and adequate placement of this figure. Port of New York adds evidence of contemporary realities to those accumulated by Waldo Frank in *Our America*. Men and women and their work are justifying us all. Paul Rosenfeld, fully and intimately sensing their achievement in the spirit of to-day, gives us his picture of it. His resource is adequate not only to elevation, but caricature; of Arthur B. Davies in the *Essay on Miller*; of Brooks, standing before America, “admonishing her like a modern Hamlet his guilty mother; accusing her of having been privy to the murder of the creative impulse.” Through the loosest writing of the essay on Ryder, pierces such a vivid characterizing phrase as: “He must have been a blinded man in the noon.”

No other American writing to-day could well have attempted the difficult problems Paul Rosenfeld set himself. He has captured not alone something of the flavour of painting, music, poems, and persons; he has set down sharp pictures that are part of American cultural history. The later essays, rich in observation and craftsmanlike writing, are documents of a living spirit, one relating all the fourteen people, and thus other Americans living and working, in a communion. Paul Rosenfeld's book, amidst the timid, tepid, and ill-informed writing known among us as criticism, is a warm and generous gift of himself, delineating our realities with something of the fervour and richness they deserve. Together with those of whom he writes he is discoverer and creator of America.

The book's interest is enhanced by illustrations; among them one from a Paul Strand photograph of Alfred Stieglitz; and five from Stieglitz portraits, of John Marin, Arthur G. Dove, Sherwood Anderson, Marsden Hartley, and Georgia O'Keeffe. Although the sensitive prints suffer in reproduction, they are handsome additions to this important record of living America.

HERBERT J. SELIGMANN

IN A FOG

STREETS OF NIGHT. *By John Dos Passos. 12mo.*
311 pages. George H. Doran Company. \$2.

THIS book was suppressed in Boston, and the first idea that occurs to one in reading it is, Oh, how very right Boston was to suppress it! . . .

I suppose it is unnecessary to add that I am speaking from Boston's point of view. As I see it, Mr Dos Passos desired to inject through the medium of his highly nervous and sensitized style the peculiar savour of Boston which, happily, is like nothing else in God's good world, its touch and feel and smell, its unpleasantly physical exterior, and behind that, its dessicated soul. The result of his endeavour is that Boston's quintessence oozes through nearly every one of Mr Dos Passos' pages like one of its famous fogs clinging like a damp hand, a tangible presence, to everything it has touched.

Reader, do you know Boston? I do not mean, have you alighted at the South Station, stopped over at the Touraine, or merely gone to Harvard? Have you experienced Boston with the soul as an almost corporal presence? It is not wholly idle to speak of cities as having corporal presences; the reaction to cities is a matter of association like everything else, but it may be none the less poignant for being (like everything else again) relative. Paris certainly has a soul, and Florence, and New York, and any number of other places, externally unremarkable, may impinge on the emotions in that way because they are the accidental landscapes of some sufficiently felt experience, whether of love or hatred. It is only the places where one is bored that are empty, and not all the museums and all the campanili in the world will fill them to a point that touches the mind. Consequently we feel that no thoughtful romantic will be disposed to deny a soul to Boston any more than one would refuse his due to the devil, both Satan and Boston being notable enemies and slayers of the soul in others. When Mr Dos Passos elected to write about three people—two young men and a

girl—who were a little too sensitive in the matter of “soul”; “afraid to live” says with great illumination the caption on the jacket, it was inevitable that he should choose the Athens of the West as the most appropriate landscape for his figurines.

“We don’t fit here,” says one of the figurines, speaking of America. “We are like people floating down a stream in a barge out of a Canaletto carnival, gilt and dull vermilion, beautiful lean-faced people of the Renaissance lost in a marsh, in a stagnant canal overhung by black walls and towering steel girders. . . .”

It is a remarkable fact in these people that they never see or experience anything that strikes their eyes or touches their emotions in the endless walks they are always taking together without being reminded of something in literature or the arts. It is a remarkable fact, but not an isolated one. Nan and Wenny and Fanshaw are the children of culture, even as you and I, and thus they never see or experience anything simply and directly like the happy and heroic Tom, Dick, or Harry in the house next door. Their souls are in part native; in part derived from the wet-nursery of a drug-ging literary romanticism, and it is the painful conflict between what is natural in them and what is bookish and romantic which makes their tragedy, and forms, as I see it, the poignant thesis of Mr Dos Passos’ story, if it has a thesis. Thus America reminds them of “a great snarling waste” in which they float like beautiful people of the Renaissance in a vermilion barge; an old man dozing in a railroad shack near the Charles reminds them of “some shadowy Rembrandt”; they are always longing, in their hearts, to go to Europe and join the mob of other culture-lovers who feed the doves in the Piazza or go poking through the Louvre . . . “I don’t think the fault’s with us,” one of them says, “I think we’re great people . . . It’s just this fearful environment.” Surely they *are* great people like those of the Renaissance, like Hamlet . . . it’s all the fault of the pursy times. At this point in one of the dismal but extraordinarily interesting conversations which consume so much of the book, someone suggests that it is time for tea and they all take a street-car (they are always taking street-cars) marked: “This Way for Harvard Square.”

This sort of existence lived through literary media would be all right if it made them any happier, or made them happy at all. The girl studies music presumably with passion, but at night at her window somewhere in the Back Bay she dreams of the shoulders and thighs of young workmen in the street below. She lives in a street of brick and brownstone houses near Symphony Hall which any one who knows at all the Symphony Hall aspect of Boston will recognize with a shudder of absolute reminiscence . . . "a perpetual sound of scales taken with tenors, sopranos, contraltos, tinkled on pianos, scraped on cellos and toodled on flutes, to say nothing of the English horn." One effect of this atmosphere is that when a splendid set of shoulders and thighs is presented her in the person of her little comrade Wenny she refuses them, afraid of the adventure of marriage; "afraid of life." Like many people, like most of us, she does not love her music enough; or enough the shoulders and thighs. Wenny, the most sympathetic, if not the most comprehensible, of Mr Dos Passos' trio, has an obscure, unhappy love of life, the mere living. The inescapable nostalgia that assails the others for Caneletto barges and the Grand Canal excites him with an aching desire to merge his own self-hating ego with even the casual waifs he picks up in the street . . . with any one rather than himself. He is rude and a little boring, but he is the only one of the three with a shade of the right dope on himself. To his friends who affirm that the fault is not in themselves, and that after all "they are surrounding themselves with beautiful things," he retorts savagely: "Culture you mean. God, I'd rather rot in a dairy lunch. Culture's mummifying the corpse." He is picked up on a park-bench by a young bum named Whitey who excites his envious ego tremendously with talk of unknown savannahs of experience . . . Tallahassee and South Bend and Havana . . . in short, with all the advantages of *not* being a child of light. "Silly, all this blah about the Renaissance," he says. "Better be like Whitey." Accordingly when his girl turns him down, he attempts to go with a prostitute, just as countless Whiteys (as well as children of light) would have done. Then occurs one of those inexplicable scenes which take place I venture to say only in a novel by Mr Dos Passos.

"They stopped at a red brick house with a sign *Furnished Rooms*. Dim gaslight in the hall.

"Whitey had said: 'O they don't bother me. I get it now and then, but I don't miss it. I'll be like that to-morrow.'

"She was sitting naked on the bed under the gasjet. . . . In his head was a ghastly sniggering. He was out the door.

"'No, you don't, you — etc. . . .'

"He piled crumpled greenbacks in her hands . . . rushed down the stairs out into the icy glare of the arclight in the street."

It would be interesting to analyse the reason why not merely Mr Dos Passos' weaklings, but *all* his heroes make the Great Refusal at such moments. If I have seemed to over-emphasize a single element in his composition, it is only because the author over-emphasizes it also.

After this episode which I have ventured to call obscure, occurs Wenny's suicide which is no less obscure, and it is a tribute to the peculiar quality of Mr Dos Passos' art that he has made this suicide, if not comprehensible, at any rate plausible.

But the third figure of the trio, Fanshaw, is really a successful creation, perhaps because Mr Dos Passos knows him so well that he had, after all, only to make a composite portrait of nearly all his friends. Fanshaw will outlive us all, as, on the basis of the survival of the fittest, he is the last real survivor of the novel. Briefly he may be described as the Man of Tea; life without Tea would be insupportable and indeed unthinkable. Tea is responsible for the longevity of the deeply civilized Chinese, and perhaps for his own. Discreetly and faultlessly attired, he stands before a really good chimney, the Primavera over the mantel, his eyes lovingly surveying the gold lettering of his books in which the authors most akin to him in spirit have had the energy to register *their* experience of the good life, Pater, Santayana, Vernon Lee. . . . Fanshaw is the happiest just as he is the most successful of Mr Dos Passos' creations. A man is always happy in proportion to the satisfaction of his desires, and when one lives from five o'clock to five o'clock he has the compensation appropriate to his deserts.

This is not intended as a critical appraisal of Mr Dos Passos' novel. Personally I am off that theory of criticism which insists that a work of fiction should be noted down point by point like a horse or a prize vegetable. I suppose that it is unnecessary to remind people that Mr Dos Passos is one of the few—the very few—

writers of fiction in this country whose fiction is really of importance. It will be said that the three characters in *Streets of Night* are negligible creations because they are boring as well as being perpetually bored. As a realist Mr Dos Passos has only to retort: *De te fabula*. The worst thing about these desolating dolls is that they are not fictitious.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

JOURNALIST CRITICS

CRITICISM IN AMERICA, Its Function and Status. *Essays by Irving Babbitt, Van Wyck Brooks, W. C. Brownell, Ernest Boyd, T. S. Eliot, H. L. Mencken, Stuart P. Sherman, J. E. Spingarn, and George E. Woodberry.* 12mo. 330 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

OF the contributions to this volume all but three are seriously damaged by vices which it is easiest to call journalistic. Not, of course, in the good sense. The style of the newspapers is well adapted to the superficial description of modest events, and hordes of people can manage it nicely. But it is when this style or frame of mind is brought to bear on subjects which are not news that we get the really unpleasant effects of journalism. For news is something which presumably interests everybody, and the news writer who tackles a special subject will make more effort to interest everybody than he will to inform his special audience. Thus one sees articles in sporting magazines about a new smokeless powder, in which the writer has tried so hard to interest fishermen and auto campers that the powder is nowhere. To treat ideas as news is to lose the ideas; and when you get through you have not even conveyed news. The journalist critic goes all the way to meet you merely to say how do you do. Thus if our newspaper writing since 1850 has been getting better and better, our criticism has been getting worse and worse, and in a way for the same daily reason. However it is very likely proper that most of the chapters in a volume called *Criticism in America* should be journalistic. For this is what we call criticism in America.

The three non-journalistic essays were not written for magazines, and most of the others were. We must not blame their authors for having written magazine articles when that was their task. Yet even a magazine article may be made respectable. I should like briefly to take up these articles one by one with an eye particularly to their journalistic faults. Perhaps I ought to try, since the articles are mainly controversial, to distinguish main streams

and tendencies of thought; but really, journalistic controversy is so haphazard, with so many appeals to popular prejudice, and so many misunderstandings, intentional and unintentional and always stupid, that I hardly think it would be fair to talk in this connexion about *thought* at all.

Professor J. E. Spingarn contributes two papers, one written in 1910 and one in 1923. In his second paper he observes that at the time of writing his first "it seemed necessary to emphasize the side of criticism which was then in danger, the side that is closest to the art of the creator," whereas "it is necessary now to insist on the discipline and illumination of knowledge and thought . . ." Such timely pleading is less journalistic than professorial; it is certainly not the way one writes for one's equals. There is something nice, however, about Mr Spingarn reading to the critics of America from the *Aesthetic* of Croce—like a man reading the sermon on the mount to a directors' meeting. Only Croce's *Aesthetic* is not the sermon on the mount, and its paradoxes sound unusually preposterous in Mr Spingarn's journalistic paraphrase, removed from their context, and without any explanation of Croce's profound idealistic prejudice.¹

His second paper recommends "the cleansing and stimulating power of an intellectual bath. Only the drenching discipline that comes from mastery of the problems of aesthetic thought can train us for the duty of interpreting the American literature of the future." And apparently the only aesthetic is Croce's, toward which American writers have been groping since Thomas Jefferson. Mr Spingarn, in an appendix to this volume, offers ten pages of quotation from Americans on the subject of art as expression, including Emerson and John Macy. One is grateful to Mr Spingarn for his appendix, and for his admiration of Poe as a critic—Poe used so harshly by W. C. Brownell and Van Wyck Brooks. One is sneakingly grateful to him for failing to speak ill of the American literature of our great period.

"And how does it happen," writes Mr Brooks in his paper on *The Critics and Young America*, "that we, whose minds are open-

¹ "Those who affirm the existence of two forms of intuition . . . attain without doubt to the distinctions and oppositions of the vulgar (or dualistic) consciousness, *but their Aesthetic is vulgar.*" (Appendix to Croce's *Aesthetic*.)

ing to so many living influences of the past, feel as it were the chill of the grave as we look back upon the spiritual history of our own race?" This question, I take it, is the starting point of Mr Brooks's whole theory about America, the most persistent and consistent one, no doubt, that any American has had. I do not propose to try recapitulating this theory, which Mr Brooks has so patiently expanded in at least one large volume and four or five little ones; I wish only to point out how in this particular expression of it, a journalistic attitude has come close to making it silly. Not content with letting his ideas do their own work, he has tried very hard here to make them as practical as possible, to apply them in the same way that Pasteur applied his knowledge of yeasts to wine making. Criticism must be dragged in, and dragged in it is by Matthew Arnold's heels. "In a famous essay," writes Mr Brooks, "Matthew Arnold said that 'it is the business of the critical power to see the object as in itself it really is'; for by doing so 'it tends to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself.'" Now this may be quite true. But Mr Brooks, in this paper, is interested only in the last half of the proposition, i. e., in results. He has observed our nineteenth century with interest and profit, but when he comes to the twentieth century, finding nothing that interests him, he ceases to observe any object at all, and allows himself to be carried away by the speciously practical spirit of the journalist reformer. He wants our critics to develop a "spiritual technique," a "complicated scheme of ideal objectives," a "programme for the conservation of our spiritual energies."

One accustomed to political language, accustomed that is to believe in its significance, will at first perhaps not be shocked at what Mr Brooks has written. But consider for a moment to what Mr Brooks is applying, however apologetically, this vocabulary and these "ideals." The person who said that the wind blows where it pleases would not have believed that a Christian could some day so patronize the spirit. Consider Mr Brooks's analogy about America and Russia: Russia lacked the technique of practical reform and therefore her well-intentioned young men became Hamlets; young Americans become Hamlets because America lacks the spiritual technique, something corresponding in the world of the spirit to reform leagues. But even accepting for the analogy's sake this hair-

raising dualism, does anything so correspond? One suspects Mr Brooks not of a stubborn attempt to reason about the unreasonable, but of having rather lazily entertained a vicious analogy, and applied a favourite vocabulary to something with which it has nothing to do.

In August 1914 the Paris taxis were commandeered and used for carrying soldiers to and from the front. In a sense, no doubt, they remained taxis, and in the same sense, throughout this article, Mr Brooks remains a critic.

The flow and texture of Mr Mencken's product is very even. That coarse, galloping rhythm, as though heart and mind had become involved in an old-fashioned waltz and could not reverse; those phrases like "rubber stamp," "Wiener Blut," "for a professor must have theories as a dog has fleas"; those triads of incongruities; they are all always right there where one hopes not to find them. But thought is not, or should not appear to be, automatic; and one prefers Mr Mencken bearing information, however libelous, to Mr Mencken theorizing, however truly. We are told that Mr T. S. Eliot has for Mr Mencken an unrequited admiration. Mr Eliot is not journalist enough; it takes a thief to catch a thief.

Professor Irving Babbitt obligingly acts the moral ogre for the pleasure of the outfit. He draws upon his vast store of obscure texts in Comparative Literature and caps every silly remark of a modern critic with an almost identical silly remark of some seventeenth or eighteenth century nonentity. But his controversy is careless, in that he picks out for indiscriminate contempt things in the modern movement which have nothing in common (e. g. Theodore Dreiser and the Armoury Show). He does not analyse; and he writes platitudes like "it is easy to be an unchained temperament" which have not even the virtue of being true. And when he leaves his guerilla warfare for a moment to look after his standard, he raises one so inoffensive that I doubt whether any of his adversaries would object to it: "in creation of the first order . . . imagination does not wander aimlessly, but is at work in the service of a supersensuous truth that it is not given to man to seize directly."

Mr Ernest Boyd's article, *Ku Klux Criticism*, ably cancels Professor Sherman's unusually Atlantic-hearted paper on *The Na-*

tional Genius. Mr Boyd is a knight-errant of another Round Table who has come to these shores to strike a blow for freedom and for the accurate translation of German. There is nothing half-way about him; even as a pedant he is all journalist.

The three non-journalistic writers of this collection are Professor George E. Woodberry, Professor W. C. Brownell, and Mr T. S. Eliot. Professor Woodberry, in an expansive and affectionate mood which is perhaps constant with him, has written a not at all negligible or vulgar little sermon about what art does or may do to the ordinary individual. Mr Woodberry is guilty of one of the opinions which in Mr Spingarn so much annoyed Professor Babbitt: "Each of us has the artist-soul." Addressing a person who has enjoyed reading a poem, Mr Woodberry remarks: "It is not that you have acquired knowledge; you have acquired heart." Well, if this is the very worst that the professor so despised by Mr Mencken can do, we are disappointed in Mr Mencken. Yet if we are to believe Mr Brooks, it is just this gentle tolerance, this love without bowels of the best, which is responsible in a great degree for the poverty in which our spirit finds itself.

Professor W. C. Brownell, undoubtedly the most mature and experienced writer of the lot, sets himself the task which in comparison with the pretensions of some of his *confrères* must appear modest, of detaching criticism from book reviewing, and of describing the critical method which he has found to be the most effective, namely portraiture. The two parts of his argument here printed are entitled Field and Function, and Method, and are the first and last chapters of his book, Criticism.

Mr T. S. Eliot even more than Mr Brownell insists on defining and delimiting the term critic, how drastically his remark on Sainte-Beuve will show: "If he was a critic, there is no doubt that he was a very good one; but we may conclude that he earned some other name." In this respect Mr Eliot is very modern (the chief *ignis fatuus* of modernism being the quintessential essence) but to read his work you would never think that he wanted you to think so. These two essays from The Sacred Wood, The Perfect Critic, and Tradition and the Individual Talent, while not his very best critical work, are typically elegant. I must say this manner of his is very pleasing after all the bluff, big-hearted, frank, slack-mouthed vulgarity we have been treated to. The basic criteria of

these essays are very broad and simple; Mr Eliot begins and ends with Matthew Arnold, the Arnold who reintroduced Aristotle's high seriousness, and who, when he wanted to show that Chaucer is not serious, quoted from *La Belle Héaulmaire*. Mr Eliot too quotes from Villon and from Dante. Introducing some notions from de Gourmont, he carries forward Arnold's analysis of the causes of bad taste and he attempts, with the help of de Gourmont and of "the aesthetic emotion," an analysis of the artistic activity, something which Arnold, himself a poet, never attempted. Such considerations may seem very remote in comparison with Mr Brooks's programmes, but actually they are not remote at all; they concern everybody who is not blind and deaf. And I believe that for many his propositions could, temporarily at least, rearrange much confused material in the mind, in the same surprising way as do for example Freud's theories on sex in childhood. This introspective confirmation is perhaps the only one anyway of which aesthetic theories are capable.

Furthermore Mr Eliot manages to place these matters in an atmosphere so rigorously moral that our moralistic critics would enjoy, while reading him, the unaccustomed pleasure of thinking of somebody else as a prig and of themselves as libertines, which intellectually at least most of them are. A few quotations will suffice to show how he makes every failure in practice appear a failure not only in intelligence, but in motive, a moral failure.

"He [the scientist] may use art, in fact, as the outlet for the egotism which is suppressed in his own specialty."

"The dogmatic critic, who lays down a rule, who affirms a value, has left his labour incomplete."

"The bad criticism . . . is that which is nothing but an expression of emotion."

"The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."

WALTER CORNELIUS BLUM

BRIEFER MENTION

PRANCING NIGGER, by Ronald Firbank, Introduction by Carl Van Vechten (12mo, 126 pages; Brentano: \$2). We hope that no devoted subscriber to *The Saturday Evening Post* will mistake this novel for a companion to the works of Mr Octavius Ray Cohen or any other would-be humorous exploiter of our coloured brethren. It is merely Mr Firbank's latest and, for us, his most exquisite impropriety in prose. Readers of Mr Firbank's former novels will vouch that the curious country of his mind has no relation to any known terrestrial region ruled by a presumably moral Providence; it is rather a floating island adrift this time in the cobalt waters of the Caribbean and beset by seas that are anything but forlorn. We hope that the author of Valmouth will continue to write stories as delectable as this one, if only to convince the people who reproach him with being trivial that he has never attempted to be anything else. We greatly need in this country novels that will be more trivial in their tone and less trivial in their art. When such a novel appears, it is always knocked off by our serious-minded critics as a relic of the frivolous Nineties; nothing could be more mistaken. The men of the Nineties, however scarlet were their little predilections, were intensely Victorian in their attitude toward conduct; "sin" appears to have been a reality to them even when they embraced it. But in Mr Firbank's pages the words "sin" and "goodness" would be anomalies because those pages are deliberately and delightfully unreal. The faintly sexual fooling, the bare suggestion of delicate depravity we find here, bear the same relation to reality as a rosy reflection in deep water bears to the body of a swimmer.

THE OVERCOAT, by Nikolay Gogol (12mo, 262 pages; Knopf: \$2) is the third volume of the complete translation which Mrs Garnett has promised. Between 1831 and 1836, when these stories were written, the Russian romantic school was dissolving either into satanism or the naturalism of later writers. This volume is a mixture of the two, suggesting Zola, Petrus Borel, and at times Bill Nye. It contains nothing that will add greatly to Gogol's American reputation, but much that has influenced the development of Russian literature. Kropotkin once said that every Russian writer of his day had rewritten *The Overcoat*.

THE PARSON'S PROGRESS, by Compton Mackenzie (12mo, 330 pages; Doran: \$2.50) is an exercise in dialectics that would much better have been published as a manifesto of the Anglo-Catholic party of the English Church than as a novel purporting to reveal the strife of faith and doubt in a young priest's soul. The problem has dramatic, psychological, and symbolical possibilities; but these are allowed to dissolve into a vapour of restlessness further clouding already opaque discussions of form and ceremony. The passage of time is not vitalized by character development, nor the progression of the theme unified by a crisis. The book represents the untimely desiccation of a writer once happily animated.

A CURE OF SOULS, by May Sinclair (12mo, 324 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50).

Miss Sinclair, who has tried all things in her time, essays in her latest novel a social comedy. Comedy, however, is not the long suit of this sincere and rather too serious-minded artist, and before long the reader is forced to abandon the trimmed walks and decorous garden, and plunges with the author into an obscure wood of tragic implications. There is something at once amorous and a trifle macabre in the way in which Miss Sinclair tackles the dissection of any character, male or female, she has set her heart on; and her portrait of a sensual clergyman, with his face of a Roman Caesar in the Decadence, and his passion for peaches and golden omelettes and a really good bed, would be difficult to surpass. As might be expected, though, the book rather falls between two unharmonized moods; the comedy is not quite rich enough, and the tragedy has a pinchbeck element about it which makes the novel appear, on the part of so authentic an artist as Miss Sinclair, a rather trivial performance. She is an excellent example of a really good writer whose very brilliant facility causes her on more than one occasion to write too much and hence to write herself down.

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1923, edited by Edward J. O'Brien. (12mo, 544 pages; Small, Maynard: \$2) is, as heretofore, the most intelligent of the annual collections, the only one which an American not wholly crass might show to a civilized European. It is against the machine-made short story, and although a good piece of machine stuff occasionally gets into the volume, the majority of the stories are on the side of art. As is usual in these cases, the stories are interesting—they can be read without tears of boredom by the intelligent adult. Year after year Mr O'Brien makes this collection, one hardly dares to think of the tedious labour involved; year after year more bad stories, more dull stories are published. But he is to be congratulated, for he has done more than keep the flag flying. He has won for it a royal salute, and often from hostile guns.

A KING'S DAUGHTER, by John Masefield (12mo, 170 pages; Macmillan: \$1.75) is a tragedy of Jezebel, Queen of Samaria, told in astonishingly pedestrian blank verse. For the last two years Mr Masefield has been influenced by Racine. He began by translating *Bérénice*; he "adapted" *Esther*; now finally he strikes for himself into Racinian tragedy, to measure his idealized Jezebel, this creature of romantic verse, against the real and terrible *Athalie*; and betrays thereby how sentimental and prolix he is. He shows to advantage only in the choruses. There he forgets Racine, and relates the story of Helen of Troy with the easy charm which is always in his grasp.

SAMSON IN CHAINS, by Leonid Andreyev, translated by Herman Bernstein (12mo, 207 pages; Brentano: \$1.50). In this play Andreyev enlarges on the theme of Samson and Delilah. It is a partial symptom of weakness that a writer should turn to the depiction of purely quantitative strength, but Andreyev develops along with this the sense of Samson's partnership with God, and does give occasional glimpses of this essentially tragic property. Yet the plot shifts rather than marches, so that its culminating moments never have a fully accumulated movement to feed upon.

KATERINA, by Leonid Andreyev, translated by Herman Bernstein (12mo, 181 pages; Brentano: \$1.50) a modern problem play, furthers the traditions of Ibsen's feminism, even to the unresolved ending which is calculated to provoke discussion and judgements among the public. However, it possesses nothing of Ibsen's close-knit technique, and its tricks for arresting attention are often bluntly stagy. As is typical of so much contemporary writing, Andreyev succeeds much better in convincing us of his heroine's dissolution than of her high-spiritedness before the dissolution began; which is especially objectionable here as the dramatic richness of her "fall" depends upon her having had a great deal to fall from.

EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, AND TWO OTHER PLAYS, by Luigi Pirandello (8vo, 258 pages; Dutton: \$3.50). The fine Italian hand of Signor Pirandello is quicker than the eye of the reader; these plays need visual representation to bring out their full values. In the swift and subtle interplay of emotions and relationships by which the dramatist carries forward his theme, Pirandello's dramas resemble blackboard demonstrations in psychology; the manner is so intricate that some of the shifts and fine shadings are practically dependent upon the stage for their apprehensions. Those long intervals of eloquent silence with which he endows certain characters cannot be stamped on the printed page. Of this collection, *Each In His Own Way* follows the fascinating method of the now familiar *Six Characters in Search of an Author*; it is drama of fine penetration and rich values. *The Pleasure of Honesty* is deft comedy driven home by delicious irony, while *Naked*, aside from being somewhat repetitious and talky, is typically in the Pirandello mood.

LETTERS FROM A DISTANCE, by Gilbert Cannan (12mo, 169 pages; Seltzer: \$2.50) gives one a full-length portrait of a novelist with one finger on the pulse of a post-war world and the other on his own. One finds Mr Cannan recording his own reactions, and at the same time testing them against the observed attitude of those with whom he comes in contact in many parts of the world. These papers form a stimulating series of pictures, being the literary fruits of a pilgrimage of readjustment.

PARSON'S PLEASURE, by Christopher Morley (12mo, 137 pages; Doran: \$1.75). To speak of the "cider-colored eyes" and "naily paws" of one's dog and of maple seeds as "coat-hangers for a fairy's closet," is poetic. For one pestered by friends "to whom you daren't be rude," to befriend the convict, the foreigner, the literary lion-cub, is noble; but what Brobdinagian ingenuousness or daring could lead this good man—a lover of "experienced proud words," whose library would make one love him for its sake alone—to proffer in verbiage such as "extuition," "hugeous," "enticive," "dolorobiously," "inerasably," "pluperfectly," "inscrutables," "indignants and blasés,"—under the patron spirits of George Herbert, Thomas Fuller, Sir Thomas Browne, Oxford University, the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard University, these addenda to Shakespeare in lame gosling prose, these "grams," and "taphs," these luckless jingles which are like nothing so much as those attempts at verse-making courageously extemporized in a game of forfeits?

THE REAL SARAH BERNHARDT WHOM HER AUDIENCES NEVER KNEW, by Mme Pierre Berton, translated by Basil Woon (illus., 8vo, 361 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3.50). An absorbing tale from the underworld. The style is cheaply journalistic, but the facts recounted are thrilling enough. Mme Berton says that the list of Sarah Bernhardt's lovers reads like a "Biographical index of the great Frenchmen of the nineteenth century." She loved wisely, according to Mme Berton, for glory or the affections, but never for mere cash. Upon the whole a good woman, Mme Berton thinks. A great to-do is made over the revelation that Bernhardt was the illegitimate child of a German Jewess by a French father, but little dramatic use is made of the illegitimate son of the actress, Maurice. The first "useful" lover was Berton, who got Mme Bernhardt into the Odéon where the first success was made; and a later "useful" lover was Sarcey the critic, whose vitriolic pen was never silenced until finally Sarah went away with him into the night. Once embarked in the reading of such a book as this, one goes on to the bitter end, loathing oneself for having bathed in such muddy waters. It is amazing how Mme Berton, herself an actress, could have written so much of her friend and so little of her friend's art. The success is understood, but not the greatness.

THE OUTLAWS OF CAVE-IN-ROCK, by Otto A. Rothert (8vo, 364 pages; Clark) contains enough thrilling material to fill many reels of movie films. It is an account taken largely from old court records, newspapers, and magazine articles dealing with the highwaymen and river pirates of the Mississippi basin at the beginning of the nineteenth century. With a cavern on the north bank of the lower Ohio river as headquarters, bands of robbers carried on their raids for many years, holding up river boats, and extending their land traffic on both banks of the river in Illinois and Kentucky. There were whole families of outlaws, the women taking, sometimes, as active a part in the thefts and murders as their men folks did. The last of the outlaws, Sturdevant, was a counterfeiter, a man of talent and address, a fine engraver, and so well liked that "he could, at any time, by the blowing of a horn, summon some fifty to a hundred men to his defense."

CRITICAL EPOCHS IN HISTORY, *Studies in Statesmanship*, by D. C. Somervell (illus., 8vo, 427 pages; Harcourt: \$5). This book is a scholarly attempt to focus attention on a succession of problems which met their respective solutions at the hands of statesmen of genius. It is an interesting method of writing history, this taking the accidental and the strictly human elements into account. Pericles, for instance, is chosen as the central figure in an account of the supremacy of Greece, Julius Caesar's effect upon Europe is well analysed, and Charlemagne's dominance illustrates the general character of mediaeval culture. The great age of the papacy is studied through the life of Innocent III. Then a chapter on changing creeds bridges the way to a consideration of Richelieu's influence in the seventeenth century. Washington and Alexander Hamilton are grouped in an exposition of new ideas of human progress, while the final chapters on Bismarck and Gladstone complete the worthwhile demonstration of the evolution of modern political ideas and institutions.

THE THEATRE

THE merciless return of the season warns me that now, if ever, is the time for self-justification. Next month I shall be a vacuum; before my annihilation I feel the need of a small apology. Not, to be sure, for the quality of the pleasures I have recorded, but for the possible lack of the power to communicate that pleasure.

My chief fault has been my interest in production. Now and again I have tried to make my readers aware of the great beating heart of humanity as it is revealed on our stages, and to analyse a few of the revolutionary ideas triumphantly projected there. But in the main I have felt that the theatre is an art, and that as an art its secondary interest—the only one I consider worth thinking about—is in its aesthetic qualities. It is hard to be indifferent to the passion of *Heartbreak House* or untouched by the humours of *Meet The Wife*; but it has for long seemed to me that if you isolate these things from the way of their presentation, you make the theatre a dull and ignoble place.

Currently three pieces engage attention. Mr Stark Young is an aesthete of the theatre, generally an acute and sensitive one. Coming to put his ideas into action in *GEORGES DANDIN* he seemed to me to fail, more or less honourably, because he did not reckon with the material facts of his situation, did not master his physical problems as Molière did. For it was impossible on the small stage of the Provincetown Playhouse to develop either lines or planes of movement. True, one has seen that stage boundless—but Molière remains French, however universal you may take him to be, and boundlessness is inappropriate. The result was precious, which again Molière is not; it was broad and obvious, and not acrid. It hadn't tone.

To my surprise the O'Neill arrangement of *THE ANCIENT MARINER* was moving in beauty. There were some dozen details which seemed wrong—notably the toy albatross and the uneasy movement which accompanied the divinely easy line "like lead into the sea." Mr O'Neill angered me by omitting the physical climax, from "The silly buckets on the deck . . ." to "And when I woke it rained!" The crux of the production lies in its timing,

for if the development of light and movement follows the spoken verses, these seem like stage directions; but if the verses even by a fraction of a second come after the events, they give all the magical effect that the events are living in the Mariner's memory, vividly seen by him, emotion, in short, recollected in tranquillity. On the night I saw the production, the timing was sometimes right and sometimes wrong—the margin is so slight that one performance may be a thousand times better than another. I have reason to believe that the intention of the producer agreed with my analysis.

I call as witness to the success of the experiment something more than the thrill it evoked in me. For the first time since my acquaintance with the poem began, I was able to share in the emotion of those final stanzas which, we have been told, have been tagged on as a moral ending to a narrative which is better without them. I have a hundred quarrels with Robert Edmond Jones; but here, at all but the end of his first season's work, I give him best. He is what he wants to be, an artist of the theatre; his destiny is unfulfilled, but he has not departed from his road.

Lee Simonson's first essay as director seemed to me not a success. I agree with nearly all of the critics in finding the material second-rate. *MAN AND THE MASSES* rises once to an emotion, when the Woman curses God, and then through the sheer power of the thought itself. It would have risen to quite as high a level without the vast construction which preceded it. For the rest Toller seems not so neat a master of expressionism as Kaiser, with less of interest to communicate.

Mr Simonson's direction was, I do not doubt, in the spirit of the play. One had these direct, hard, brutal impressions; one had the sense of swiftness, of clash, of irreconcilable elements. But the mechanism eventually became more interesting than the spirit which animated it. When Mr Simonson showed us the crowd disintegrating, forming itself again, and absorbing in it the woman who had stood outside, the movements were simple and accurate; when he tried to make the same crowd reassemble after the fight in the streets, the movements were so wilfully mechanized that the way the picture was being composed quite destroyed any interest in the composition when it was completed.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

THEORETICALLY the Independent Exhibition ought to be a forum for the exploitation of ideas. The explorer could there test the darlinest fruits of his experience. In practice it works out otherwise. Or perhaps you'll say it doesn't. It depends upon how you define "ideas." Or perhaps ideas in art are extinct. At any rate the wished for evolution of technique has not occurred quite as it had been expected. New manners of painting or hitherto forbidden subjects have not only not founded schools, but they have not sprung to notice. On the other hand the long repressed emotions of the uninstructed populace that bubbled to the surface in the very first Independent and that amused us so much then have gone on bubbling until now they spout geyser-like to the skies and form the only significant phenomena of the American art season. From being freak specimens in chance corners of the show, they have multiplied until they now dominate the event. Artists, especially perhaps the young artists, laugh with, instead of at, these new-comers. "Isn't it a scream?" in loving accents, is meant as the highest praise. What the sincere author of the work that evokes this encomium might think of it, if he chanced to hear it, is a question; but the answer to the question, doubtless, is that the painter who cannot stand a little laugh can't stand much; is not, in fact, robustly in love with his work.

Spreading from the Independents the contagion of naïveté has extended to the other galleries, even to the galleries of commerce. The New Gallery, the Dudensing Gallery, and the Whitney Studio Club have arranged to exhibit works chosen from the display on the Waldorf Roof, and the only one so far seen, that arranged by Mr John Sloan for the Whitney Studio Club, certainly put a premium upon eloquence untaught. The amateurish note has appeared in many of the uptown shows, but nowhere has it been so emphasized as at the Whitney Studio Club. Here the late Mr E. L. Henry has been revived and featured side by side with a Miss Clarke—discovered last year by Mr Brook at the Independents—and who paints not from nature, but from photographs, and who gets into her appealing and decorative canvases something the photograph has not. Later on in the same gallery, a group of

paintings by Mr John Mauro made a sensation, dazzling, among others, Mr Marsden Hartley, who had just arrived from Paris where he had seen nothing, he said, so superbly straight from the shoulder. Mr Mauro is a cabinet-maker of Paterson, N. J., and has painted symbolical religious pictures for years, apparently because an inner urge compelled him to. He assuredly is not one to be deterred by a little laugh. The pictures now shown are large, the Crucifixion extending from floor to ceiling, and the two Adam and Eves being almost as big. The Crucifixion had to be carried from the frame-maker's to the gallery, and it made a veritable sensation in the streets. Its powers in that respect suggest a use that might immediately be made of it if a priest with courage could be found. As a banner in a sacred procession it could not be surpassed. In several other ways, too, it cannot be surpassed. It has a heart-searching, early Italian frankness. Never have I seen an Adam so accused of guilt. It may have been Eve's idea, but the sin was Adam's as well! And all who saw these astonishingly free paintings conceded that they were handsomely decorative.

And on top of this came the Louis Eilshemius exhibition at the Société Anonyme. Mr Eilshemius is well known in New York as a writer to the daily press of letters that have a peculiar, auto-intoxicated quality, but it remained for M Marcel Duchamp to discover him as an artist in the very first Independent show. The malicious said that what really attracted M Duchamp was the price-label of \$10,000 upon a picture that everybody laughed at. The public continued to laugh at Mr Eilshemius' prices and the prices continued to grow until the neat valuation of \$50,100 was appended to the contribution to this year's Independent. This hocus-pocus, however, cannot be blamed for the public's former scorn of Mr Eilshemius' art, since he is no longer a young man and for years had besieged the dealers and the official societies for recognition. In the Société Anonyme exhibition the fantastic price-labels have dropped away and the hocus-pocus. Mr Eilshemius stands revealed as an artist of genuine poetic powers. The collection is a pleasure from beginning to end, and there is enough in it to found a reputation upon. He does not soar, apparently, to the heights of Albert Ryder, nor squeeze the palette for enamels as that master did, but he belongs to the same brotherhood; he is a poet.

To group him with the naïve artists now being rescued

from the Independents' ocean is to give in one way a false impression, but on the other hand there is nothing in Mr Eilshemius' modest, uninflated style ever to win approval from an orthodox academician; and the present acceptance, in which I am not alone, must be largely due to the increased openness of mind now prevalent and aided by the Independents. This openness of mind, as it now manifests itself in New York, gains significance from the fact that it seems to be something in the air and not wholly confined to the painters. The old-fashioned rugs, distinctly "screams" in their way, are now the most fashionable of possible possessions, and the painted furniture and coloured lithographs of our forefathers are not curios, but fit neatly into the modern aesthetic. If democracy be at last safe, as the Dawes Committee insists it is, then this uninstructed "art of the people" I have been speaking of, opportunely heralds the new era.

New York from the first has been sceptical of Jacob Epstein's London exploits, and the present exhibition of the sculptor's work in the Scott and Fowles Galleries does nothing to dispel the doubt. Mr Epstein proves himself a clever man of the world, but that is all. It was clever of him to leave New York—a bad town for sculptors—and to choose London. London is excessively easy for artists, and swallows anything in the way of a pose with avidity; and in addition has a wonderful press, if "press" be understood to include the undergraduate school of best-selling, satirical romances each issue of which insists upon mirroring the Café Royal and its noisiest clients.

Mr Epstein is apt enough as a workman, but nothing he shows here indicates that he desires to be more than sensational. His cheeky portraits of duchesses and archaistic Christs do not shock nor interest us. The one exception that suggests that Mr Epstein might have arrived somewhere in a more exacting community is his portrait of Mr Muirhead Bone. This is not only straightforward, but relentless modelling. Every inch yields its quota of character. But in the midst of so much bombast and bluff, I am entirely inclined to put all the credit for this portrait up to Bone himself. In the presence of this singularly honest artist, the prince of charlatans must have been tamed.

HENRY McBRIDE

COMMENT

OLD subscribers to *The New Republic*, when they get together of a spring night, are wont to exchange the usual lovers' confidences. They recall, with a tenderness surely not misplaced, the antique moral oratory of the Roman Lippmann, and the higher passional moments in the theatre-sonneteering of the Keatsian Young, and (For where does true love pause more cherishingly than upon the very awkwardnesses of the loved being?) most often, those awninged editorials, those great lumbering four-wheelers, of the Dutch Reformation Croly. Yet, when we take down from their sagging shelves our imposing bound volumes of the back numbers of Mr Croly's journal, the pious hand turns most easily and most reverently not to any of these, golden though they be, text pages. This hand turns most easily to the imposing advertising section, and there, trembling, smoothes out before our filling eyes the page advertising *The New Republic* itself. There, as Dean Swift remarked (to be sure, in another connexion) speaks genius. There foam the high seas of adventurous prose, there rides all storms the ethical galleon of Right Opinion, there Rome and Keats and, ay, even the Dutch Reformation, are overtopped and, upon their own sailing courses, outpointed. As to the text and policy of *The New Republic*, even the Faithful are permitted occasionally to harbour reservations; as to the advertisements of *The New Republic*, he who does not swallow (and avidly) hook, line, and sinker is no virtuous man.

"(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago.)"

These marine pages, these pages which, like the conch-shell found upon our Atlantic seaboard and preserved upon our bird's-eye maple bookcase, give out what we must again resort to a poet to properly depict—

"The surge and thunder of the Odyssey"

—these so essentially marine pages have suffered an earth change. No longer, though we hold them ever closer to our ear, do we catch the solemn and melodious breathing of Old Ocean. They might as well have been bought in the Five and Ten Cent Store.

When The New Republic next announces, as it shortly will, "Bound volumes for the six months just past are now ready. In applying for same please state whether you desire the advertising pages to be bound in or not."—When this notice appears, I shall break a venerable tradition, a tradition I had never thought to question: I shall order my bound volume for these months to include no advertisements.

After the lordly music of the open main, who would permit upon his shelf such tootings as these:

"Our task¹ and the task The Freeman was engaged upon are very much the same. It is first of all to arouse discussion, but to accomplish this it must awaken in that small fraction of Americans a consciousness of responsibility for the survival of a free and unfettered journalism in America, now seriously threatened. Unless that responsibility is felt and unless there is to emerge in America a sufficient public which actively prefers intelligent unbiased journalism, how can it too long continue?"

What on earth does this last sentence mean anyhow?

Let me quote the following consecutive sentences:

"The New Republic it is true has enjoyed a hopeful measure of success. Its revenues have exceeded those of any similar magazine. It has received the enthusiastic and constant support of thousands of readers. Its financial results have not, however, been such as to arouse emulation."

Is it then "financial results" which our little cenoby is seeking? Is it then "financial results" that we, the Faithful, are to "emulate"? Surely we had dreamt otherwise. Surely The Lady Bountiful had not for this given of her earthly substance! Surely to no such terrene end had Brother Herbert raised his weekly voice and led the vocal cenoby!

¹ I quote the first paragraph of an advertisement entire.

IN *The New Republic* for April twenty-third, Mr Leo Stein, of whom we learn that he "has made a life study of painting," writes at some length upon Picasso. This is not the place to consider his argument as a whole. I desire merely to quote the last half of one paragraph:

"As for his intellectuality, that is rubbish. His intellectual baggage is of the slightest, and the total output of intellect in his work is negligible. Picasso is thoroughly intelligent in the ordinary human way, and is ingenious to the last turn, but he is in no serious sense a thinker."

I recall Mr Stein's anecdote of how another critic sent Auguste Renoir the numbers of a certain journal containing a series of articles by that critic upon Renoir, and of how these journals were later discovered, uncut, serving to prop the model's stand; and I recall how Mr Stein drew from these data the logical conclusion that Renoir was not a man of intellect—"in no serious sense a thinker."

It seems to some of us that Mr Stein has not yet discovered the direction in which his own talents lie. Why sulk in Florence? Why not quit a continent which, according to Mr Stein himself, has, since the Renaissance, produced no artist of intellect? Why not return to America, which is, after all, the Land of Opportunity? And—a thought strikes us—why not try that most intellectual of modern fields, Advertising? Why not enquire at *The New Republic*? Surely The Editors of *The New Republic* have always gone in passionately for "intellectual baggage": I have even heard it whispered, The Editors of *The New Republic* go to bed with wardrobe trunks, "just to sleep on them."

Of course Mr Stein's advertisements will not be attractive to the eye (for that one must have aesthetic sense) but at least they should be logical, to the point, and not ignoble.

of
g,"
on-
alf

ual
his
ary
ous

ste
of
ere
d I
ion
e a

the
ce?
elf,
Why
ty?
ual
Re-
ays
ard
with

to
hey